**Ford's Budget** *Melville Ulmer, Peter Ognibene & The Editors*

# THE NEW REPUBLIC

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# TRB

from Washington ®
February 7, 1976

## Political Patter

The clean-cut young man who has positioned himself on the aisle seat in the first row is ready with the first question when Jimmy Carter has finished his opening remarks at the little gathering in the hall at the University of New Hampshire, at Durham.

I have heard the same introductory comment by the candidate three times now, and I suppose it tells something of his presence and manner that it doesn't sound as corny as it reads in print afterward. He wants "our nation to have once again a government as good and honest and decent and truthful and fair and competent and idealistic and compassionate—and as filled with love—as are the American people."

He says it in a low voice and with a little catch in his throat as though it were occurring to him for the first time. The audience is silent; people don't applaud; they are impressed.

So the young man on the aisle seat stands up and asks a question, and the Yankee listeners, who maybe are Congregationalists and tight lipped about religion, cringe a little because he is asking Carter, in effect, in evangelical jargon, "Are you saved?" That old cynic Henry Mencken, with his china blue eyes, would rub his hands and gloat over the situation. It just embarrasses us.

He pauses for a moment that seems longer than it is, and then answers simply and matter-of-factly, "Yes, I am twice-born," and goes on quietly from there. A spark has passed between the two; they have communicated in their own way, in a language that is more familiar, perhaps, in revivalist Georgia than in snow-bound New Hampshire. We go out into the waist-high drifts wondering who will be the next President and whether it could be, this surprising political novelty?

I have a political activist friend in Washington who burst out against Carter with a vehemence that startled me: "He's a two-faced louse!" he ejaculated or words to that effect. My friend thinks Carter's a hypocrite; maybe he is prejudiced; deep down, perhaps, he is asking a variant of that old question, "Can anything good come out of Georgia?" Politicians are permitted a certain degree of ambiguity, and their survival requires cloudy rhetoric on occasion. In the Iowa caucus on the emotional abortion issue Carter said, yes, he was against abortion. No, he wasn't for a constitutional amendment. He added a maybe—maybe he would favor some vague federal statute on the subject. Democratic liberal candidates denounced him for cynical deviousness and Carter won the contest.

My impression is that audiences yearn to believe Jimmy Carter. They are looking for something. It is his manner and tone. He has a mop of hair like a wig turning gray at the ears, a trademark grin, a warm, friendly manner, a pietistic appeal and a homely face of the most attractive sort that reminds one of Eleanor Roosevelt. Underneath is a first-rate intelligence and an ambition hard as nails. After Annapolis, peanut farming and warehousing, and after leading a 10-year fight to end segregation in the local church, the local school and the local community, he ran for office with the public support of segregationists.

Did they think they could control him? As governor he put up the picture of Martin Luther King, Jr. in the state capitol, and he has the support now of some of Georgia's respected black leaders, Andrew Young and Julian Bond. It's as odd a combination as American politics has recently seen.

At a recent rally of Democratic presidential hopefuls here Jimmy Carter stunned his audience by unexpectedly announcing that if revenue sharing of federal funds is extended (as he hopes), the money should be sent to cities, *not* states that are diverting money from poor people to marginal capital improvement projects like golf courses and parks. Wisconsin's Gov. Lucey registered sharp "distress" but couldn't budge Jimmy. If he is ambiguous on some things he is obstinate on others: "sot" the Yankees call it.

Ploughing around in New Hampshire's snow now, with the primary three weeks off, is Ronald Reagan. He is as surprising a candidate in his way as Carter is. At every appearance for the two days I heard him, he told audiences that the state sends "$115 million" annually to Washington and gets back only "$100 million" in services so why wouldn't it be better, he asked in his frank likable way, to just keep the money at home and save $15 million?

At his final press conference on the trip Ted Knap, of Scripps-Howard, asked him if that extra $15 million didn't go into the army, navy, air force and interstate highways and wasn't it a bargain, therefore, and where did he get the statistics anyway?

Ronald Reagan registered complete surprise. He explained that he had "never understood the thing that way" and that he couldn't remember where he got the figure and "if I'm mistaken," he said disarmingly, "I stand corrected." What more was there to say?

President Ford will be up in New Hampshire shortly, too, the very fountainhead of the movement for a do-less government and a politician who has staked a great deal on a bold gamble. He says in his budget that he knows of no way to get unemployment below seven percent in the coming year and is asking for reelection on that basis. Mr. Ford deserves a good deal of credit for his frankness and the consistency of his beliefs. Mr. Ford has asked the nation to tighten its belt, lower its expectations and accept what he calls the "new realism," which means the trickle down theory *and* reliance on private business, not the government, to make jobs.

In essence this is what Herbert Hoover preached, but things are a lot better now. Income maintenance programs (unemployment insurance, food stamps, social security) have cushioned the worst recession since the '30s; the most amazing aspect of the whole affair is that there have been no riots, no bloodshed. The very programs Mr. Ford wants to curtail have buoyed us up so far. Liberal economists think it is too early to adopt the contractionary budget Mr. Ford favors, but Congress will probably take care of that, just as it gave us last year's tax cut that helped the current revival. Democrats will be wise not to underestimate Mr. Ford's appeal. He will blame Congress even while things get better (if they do). Mr. Ford has faith.

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# An Unpromising President

The "new realism" of Jerry Ford's 1977 Budget is one of the harshest themes ever chosen for a reelection campaign. It represents a new departure in political rhetoric unlike anything in the porkbarrel American tradition. Instead of promising to create more jobs, to stimulate rapid economic growth, to improve the lot of the average taxpayer, President Ford promised to do less than ever before. He swore he would spend less money on federal food stamp programs, give less support to public education, provide fewer public service jobs for the unemployed and cut back summer work programs for poor inner-city youth. All this is to be done in the name of fighting inflation. Ford also proposed cuts in Medicare and child nutrition programs.

Promises (or threats) like these are unlikely to go far because they are too abrupt, too sweeping and too heavily concentrated on programs that help disadvantaged groups. Congress proved that it doesn't subscribe to this kind of new realism by voting overwhelmingly last week to override the veto of the HEW and Labor Department appropriation bill. Ford had vetoed it because it was one billion dollars more expensive than his own proposal. The vote against him in the House was 310-113, and in the Senate 70-24, indicating that even loyal Republicans will have trouble supporting his 1977 austerity budget.

Ford's plan for nutrition programs, for example, would eliminate or decrease benefits for an estimated nine million people who now use food stamps to help pay for feeding their families. To shave federal costs in this area, the President would cut back aid for the near poor, the families that earn just more than the officially defined "poverty income" of $5050 a year for a family of four. Rather than work with the present system, which allows for gradual decreases in food stamp benefits as family income increases, Ford would simply end all benefits at the poverty line. This and other proposed changes would create a marked gap between the welfare poor and the working poor. It would also create work disincentives by making it disadvantageous to earn extra income above the poverty line. This "reform" does not follow the recommendations laid out several months ago by Ford's Agriculture Department, which administers food stamps, and it will find few supporters in Congress. A Senate Democrat who worked on nutrition programs felt the President's new plan was designed for campaign use

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and not for legislation. He expected it to go nowhere.

The President's proposed changes in health insurance are more generous, but no more likely to win approval than his food stamp plan. Ford hopes to save $2.2 billion by requiring the elderly who use Medicare to pay a larger share of their own medical bills. This is an old idea, proposed several years ago by Richard Nixon, but never approved. Ford intends to offset the negative aspects of this plan by adding on an insurance bonus. He would set an upper limit on the amount that any Medicare patient would be required to pay out of pocket if hit by a "catastrophic" illness. The government would pay all bills exceeding $750 a year. At present there's no insurance of this kind for the elderly.

Ford's Medicare plan is deceptive, however, in that the number of people it would help is far smaller than the number it would burden with higher medical bills. Today a Medicare patient must pay the first $104 of his or her hospital bills each year and the first $60 of doctor bills. Ford would change the rules so that each patient would have to pay $104 *plus 10 percent* for hospital charges (up to a maximum of $500 a year) and $77 *plus 10 percent* (up to $250 a year) for doctor bills. According to Rep. Dan Rostenkowski, chairman of the House Ways and Means subcommittee on health, only one-half of one percent of the people who use Medicare would benefit from Ford's innovation because few of them stay in the hospital long enough to run up huge bills. Yet, Rostenkowski said, under the President's plan "every beneficiary would have to pay more than $104 [the current standard fee for 99 percent of Medicare participants] no matter how long or short his stay in the hospital." These figures are still uncertain, however, because the budget writers made some mistakes in calculating costs.

In education, Ford's cuts would reduce the amount of federal support for elementary school systems and make it more difficult for college students to get government aid in paying their bills. For example, Ford would completely do away with a provision of Social Security that permits children of widows or disabled workers to continue getting government support up to age 22 if they remain in school. In the future, this support will end for all children at age 18. Other changes would reduce the federal share of support for work-study programs from 80 to 50 percent and raise the interest charged to students who take out federally guaranteed student loans.

There are also drastic reductions in federal support of public service employment. By October 1977, for example, Ford would like to phase out nearly 300,000 federally financed jobs under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. In addition to these direct cutbacks in spending, Ford would like to consolidate 59 aid categories into four large "block-grant" programs covering health, education, child nutrition and social services to the needy. This, Democrats believe, is a roundabout way of diminishing or phasing out the programs. Without question, it is a way of phasing out Democrats, for under the block-grant system, state officials—not US congressmen—have first responsibility for overseeing the use of the money.

The few examples described here, though by no means comprehensive, suggest the direction in which the Ford administration is headed. "Soft" programs—ones that help people directly—are being scaled down because they're thought to be a waste of money, and new "hard" programs are being picked up instead. Ford announced that he would like to build four new federal prison facilities, hire scores of new federal attorneys and police, subsidize energy producing companies and increase the national military budget by $8.3 billion. The Ford plan, therefore, is to ask states, cities and private institutions to cope with the toughest social problems of the day while the federal government becomes preoccupied with more technological and business oriented problems of national defense and energy production.

The Ford budget demonstrates the President's conservatism and may help him in his contest with Ronald Reagan. What it doesn't do, fortunately, is bind Congress to vote with him or the electorate to vote for him in November.

# Politicians Bearing Economic Gifts

The economic programs of the two major parties have now been brashly set forth for all to see. In a series of reports on the state of the union, the budget and the economy, President Ford pledged the tightly restrained economic growth and generous support for business profits for which his party is justly celebrated. Democratic spokesman Muskie, in an evangelical reply, reiterated his party's traditional commitment to prosperity and full employment, but boldly avoided mention of either the cost of that effort, were it to be seriously undertaken, or any tangible method for avoiding the accelerated inflation it would doubtlessly inspire. As viewed by Mr. and Mrs. Average S. (for Sick-of-it-all) America, it was a familiar choice between more unemployment and less inflation, or less unemployment and more inflation, the same choice with which they have been regularly faced since World War II. The only difference is that the terms of the trade have grown worse with the passing years.

Of the two, President Ford's program has the advantage of logic, in the sense that it could probably deliver more or less what it promises. This feat was facilitated by promising very little. By 1977, according to the President's forecasts, we may look forward to an

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inflation rate of six percent per annum, down from seven percent in 1975 and about double the rate prevailing in the 20 years prior to the 1973 oil embargo. In return for this impressive gift to the American people, the nation will be asked to make do with a firmly subdued level of business activity. Unemployment would remain at 6.9 percent of the labor force (or more) through 1977 if you don't count last year (when it was 8.5 percent); it's the highest since 1941. These near record-breaking results would be achieved, as the economy slowly expands, by retarding the growth of government's expenditures even more than that of its receipts.

The prospective spur to the economy, sufficiently strong to keep the present insipid recovery in sleepwalking progress, is provided by President Ford's proposed tax reductions. These are judiciously designed in two ways. They take effect well *before* the coming election, and also before the scheduled depressing cutbacks in some government outlays. Secondly they bear gifts for all, but especially attractive ones for business. The theory is that if it is properly rewarded in advance, American industry will provide enough jobs to keep the unemployment rate from rising above its present level. So what might superficially seem to be pro-business is really pro-labor or better yet, pro-America. Accordingly, a 12 percent investment tax credit is provided for electric utilities, a 10 percent credit temporarily granted for the remainder of business is given permanent status, the corporation profit tax is reduced from 48 to 46 percent, dividend receipts are exempted from taxation, and sundry credits, subsidies and accelerated depreciation formulas are concocted for the construction industry, banks and other financial institutions. Even a proposed $10 billion personal income tax reduction (to be superimposed on the $18 billion only recently enacted) would, at least in absolute terms, return more to the rich, who are able to invest, than to the poor. A family of four with $50,000 in taxable income would gain $510 in take-home pay. A family with a $7000 income would gain $342. Balance in the tax package (testifying to fiscal responsibility) is secured by proposing a rise in the regressive social securty tax and in Medicare charges for the aged.

The same concern for the industrial might of America, and for the central role of profits in sustaining it, is evidenced on the expenditure side of the President's budget. Outlays for public service jobs are to be reduced and phased out entirely by the autumn of 1977, unemployment insurance benefits are to be cut, and outlays for food stamps and school lunches curtailed. But the welfare of industrial hardware manufacturers will be sensitively guarded through a healthy boost in funding for the Department of Defense and a thoughtful financial fillip for the faltering space program. And no doubt these appropriations would create some jobs insofar as they are not absorbed in cost overruns. The bold move begun by President Nixon to bring government closer to the people is joyfully extended by the proposed conversion of 59 federal programs in education, health and community services into block grants to the states, to do with as in their wisdom they decide to do. Some would decide to slack off on their own welfare efforts.

For Democrats, the President's program should look like a target that could be missed only by a blindfolded chimpanzee in a straitjacket. But lofty words alone won't carry very far. Nor will harking back, as Sen. Muskie did, to the (by this time) discredited programs of the Kennedy-Johnson years—jawboning to contain inflation, stop-go fiscal policies, timid, unimaginative and temporary public service jobs, limited health insurance with no provision for controlling doctor and hospital fees, and flashy new agencies superimposed on a wildly disorganized, displanned federal government. Contrary to what one might suspect from listening to the intrepid generalizations of cautious politicians, there is no dearth of new ideas afloat. What is needed is a politician with the fortitude to propose the proper measures for a stable, just, safe and fully employed economy even if they happen to be unconventional. That takes extraordinary leadership qualities of a kind glaringly absent from the political scene since FDR.

Given the political battle lines as presently drawn, the economic outlook for the 12 months or so ahead is fairly well determined. The sluggish economic recovery in progress is likely to continue at a somewhat faster pace than officially forecasted. The Democratic congressional majority, many members of which will be seeking reelection, can scarcely avoid reducing taxes. In one form or another, they will accept the President's proposals but probably in greater volume and certainly with more relief for lower and middle income classes and less of the extravagant benefits accorded business. Most important, the tax reductions are scheduled for July 1 of this year. On the other hand, with a new shift in fiscal periods, the President's $394.2 billion ceiling on spending would not take effect until the 12-month period starting on October 1; at the earliest, its depressing impact on business activity could not be felt until some months after that. Besides Democratic leaders in the House and the Senate promise fervently that they plan to disregard the ceiling anyway.

In sum at least part of the President's political calculations are likely to prove correct. The right wing of his party may be mollified by an austere anti-big government budget. Yet the economic pump will have been primed, sufficiently at least to keep the gross national product and the level of unemployment moving in the proper directions—up for the first and down slightly for the second. If the improvement is modest enough, as it probably will be, inflation may ease off a bit.

The key question is whether the President's estimate of probable voter reaction is correct. He is banking on

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the gratitude of the majority for *improvements*—slightly higher output, more profits, a few more jobs, perhaps somewhat less inflation. But on the other hand, the *absolute level* of business activity is likely to remain dismal, not far from his own dreary forecast of seven percent unemployment and a consumer price index still climbing at a six percent annual rate. If so, at least $150 billion will be lost this year through failure to utilize the economy's full potential. Democrats can be counted on to make these points in addition to a vigorous attack on the planned retreat of the federal government from responsibilities in welfare, education, environmental protection and business regulation. But they will have a difficult time making charges stick, just as McGovern did, unless they present an imaginative and credible plan of their own.

**Melville J. Ulmer**

## The Pentagon

# Hardware Bills

The defense budget submitted to Congress by President Ford calls for, in his words, "a real growth in purchasing power over last year's." Yet his recent statements and the budgetary documents he sent to Capitol Hill don't supply a convincing rationale for his plan to obligate $114.9 billion—$12.6 billion more than the current budget.

While other cabinet departments and most social programs are being retrenched, the Pentagon is claiming a larger share of the whole: 25.4 percent of the federal budget, up a full percentage point over the present authorization. Despite the increase, the Ford administration has exercised some—though not much—restraint over the generals and admirals. Last year's official guesstimate for the 1977 defense budget, for instance, was about $4 billion higher than what the President ultimately requested in January, and the projected 1980 budget, estimated at $147.9 billion last year, appears in this year's documents as $139.8 billion. So, though the trend is skyward, fiscal pressures have apparently compelled the White House to slow somewhat the rate of climb.

Last year Senate liberals engaged their colleagues in debating the foreign-policy premises upon which, in theory, a defense budget should be based. ("Congress and the Pentagon," *TNR*, July 5 & 12, 1975.) Although the debate had little impact on military legislation, it set a precedent that subsequent sessions of Congress might use to align military spending with foreign policy. A renewal of that debate could force the administration to articulate its overseas objectives and its perception of how specific foreign deployments and weapons are related to those objectives. Should Congress find some of those objectives inappropriate or the particular force attached to a valid objective excessive, it could trim the military budget accordingly.

In past years congressmen who sought to cut defense spending generally belonged to one of two camps: those seeking to eliminate individual items from the Pentagon's budget and those "budget-firsters" who sought to impose an overall spending ceiling. The former group aimed at specific weapons or overseas deployments but rarely got more than 40 percent of the House and Senate membership to support its amendments. The latter group attempted to forge a coalition of liberal doves and fiscal hawks to hack a billion or so dollars from the budget and occasionally succeeded in getting the Pentagon to tighten its belt a notch. Neither group, however, was ever able to mount a sustained effort. Moreover they often wound up bickering among themselves about which approach was better. Fortunately, recent changes in the law, notably the congressional budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, served to eliminate that conflict by making both approaches compatible.

The budget-firsters now have an institutional route of attack through the House and Senate budget committees. In the first session of the 94th Congress, the new procedures, though not then legally binding, were given a shakedown cruise and seemed to work fairly well. Indeed the committees were responsible in large part for reducing the military budget $7.8 billion. Although the House Appropriations Committee had regularly made cuts in Pentagon spending before 1975, they were usually about half that size.

Under the new budgetary procedures, Congress must establish spending ceilings. So, the efforts of individual members of Congress who believe Pentagon spending excessive will probably be directed toward specific items in the budget. If the debate about the foreign-policy premises of defense spending continues this session, congressmen will have a chance to probe the rationale for American forces abroad. The Ford administration has asserted that any overseas reduction would signal American weakness. Critics argue that those force levels are largely arbitrary and ought to be reduced to save money and to reflect post-Vietnam realities (*viz.*, that the United States will no longer play world policeman). Although the differences between the Republican President and Democratic Congress ought to spark a spirited dialogue, the legislature may decide to slough off the matter of overseas troops until after the November elections.

The area in which individual legislators could hope to exercise the most influence is in the administration's choice of new weapons. Indeed most of the increase in the budget can be attributed to anticipated costs of military hardware. Although more than half the budget goes for personnel, those costs have stabilized and are

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not expected to rise in the foreseeable future. Indeed they account for 54.1 percent of this year's budget but will amount to 51.7 percent next year. It is the exorbitant price tag on new weapons, not paychecks to active and retired servicemen, that is driving the budget higher.

For the past several years Congress has appropriated more than $2.5 billion to permit the air force to develop and begin testing the B-1 bomber. This year the administration is asking for $1.5 billion to begin mass production of what will eventually be a 241-plane fleet. No one knows what full-scale production would ultimately cost the US treasury. The air force figure, $21 billion, conveniently leaves out certain items that could hardly be considered optional equipment for a strategic bomber. When one includes the cost of nuclear weapons, additonal avionics and a new fleet of aerial refueling tankers, as well as operation and maintenance expenses, the final tab for flying the B-1 could easily surpass $75 billion.

With missiles that could obliterate the United States and Soviet Union in a matter of 30 minutes, would there be any important targets left when the bombers arrived hours later? Should the United States further strain the national debt for a bomber that would be, at best, only marginally better than those already in service? Critics, of course, have long been asking such questions, but recently some of the most influential members of the congressional establishment have taken them up. Two Pentagon stalwarts, Rep. George Mahon, the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, and Sen. Henry M. Jackson, a pacesetter on the Senate Armed Services Committee, have publicly voiced their doubts that the B-1 is worth the price. For several years Sen. Thomas McIntyre, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services subcommittee on research and development has been carefully examining the bomber to lay the groundwork for Congress to make an informed decision this year whether or not to authorize mass production. Although it may not have been McIntyre's intent, the subcommittee's published hearings contain the elements of a strong case against the new bomber. Although Congress has not in recent years killed a major weapon requested by the Pentagon, the B-1 could be a historic first for this Bicentennial year.

Congress will face a clear-cut, yes-or-no, decision on the B-1. Other programs will offer less stark choices. The most expensive (nearly $3 billion) is the Trident ballistic-missile submarine, which has survived attacks in the House and Senate and is unlikely to be seriously challenged again. A number of other programs, however, might well prove vulnerable if subjected to critical scrutiny.

In its rush toward modernization, the navy ship-building budget has jumped in one year from $3.9 billion to $6.3 billion. Some $1.6 billion of the request is for cost overruns for ships Congress thought it had paid for in years past. Although the navy vigorously challenged many of the shipbuilders' claims as recently as 1973, the service has since joined forces with the shipbuilders to keep the projects, as well as the contractors, afloat. Moreover, many of the programs, notably the nuclear-powered cruiser, seem ill-conceived.

The other services also have their share of questionable projects. The army continues to develop the SAM-D anti-aircraft missile even though other weapons would be more effective and less costly. The air force's advanced warning and control system (AWACS), a flying radar plane originally designed for defending the United States against low-flying Soviet bombers, is now being peddled for use as a tactical command post to fight a war in Europe. Senators Thomas Eagleton and Birch Bayh have been presenting strong cases against AWACS and SAM-D respectively and look for a more skeptical and cost-conscious Congress to put an end to these programs this year.

President Ford said that he had based his defense budget on a "careful assessment of the international situation and the contingencies we must be prepared to meet." And, he warned: "We dare not do less." Presumably the Secretary of Defense and joint chiefs of staff will be somewhat more explicit about what "international situation" and "contingencies" justify so large an increase in military hardware. The final judgment, however, will rest with Congress. It now has the institutional mechanisms to examine the administration's assumptions and judgments and render its own informed conclusions. All that is necessary is the will to use the power.

**Peter J. Ognibene**

# The Losing Battle Against Heroin

As recently as a decade ago it was possible to believe that stronger policing of the laws would prevent the spread of drug-taking for pleasure and confine addiction to the neighborhoods where junkies already lived. That was before the drug boom of the '60s. By 1970 everything had changed; the amount of marijuana and heroin being used in the US, particularly by young people, increased so rapidly in four or five years that sociologists began talking about the drug abuse "epidemic." After that, the use of illicit drugs continued to grow rapidly, but the federal government stubbornly refused to face the truth. Richard Nixon declared a brief war on drugs in 1971 and then hastily proclaimed himself the victor in 1972. In reality he lost. Gradually

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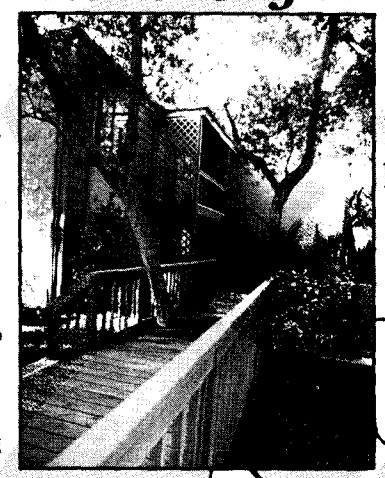

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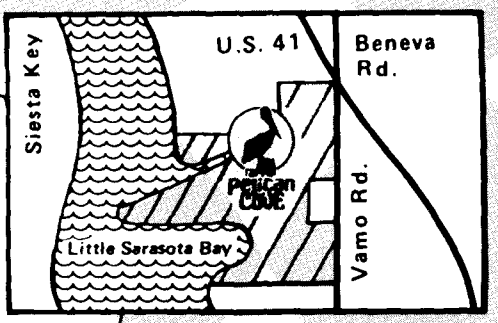


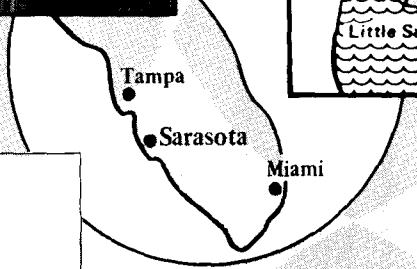


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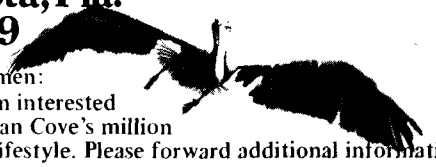

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the police themselves began to understand the scale and the nature of the problem, though they had little help from their leaders, the politicians. Enforcement experts no longer talk about eradicating drug abuse, but—as in the White House study written by the Domestic Council last October and gingerly approved by Jerry Ford—they plan strategies for "containing" heroin. The most thoughtful and honest of the narcs recognize that even their best attempts to control illicit drug use have had little impact.

In truth the use of narcotics has grown steadily since the 19th century, with only one major period of decline during World War II. Today drug-taking for pleasure is common throughout the US, especially among the young, who prefer the "soft" drugs marijuana and hashish. To confirm this one need only look at the data collected by the surveys of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). Two national surveys have been made, one in 1972 and a second in 1974. The results, announced last fall, were surprising. In the first survey, it was found that among youth 12 to 17 years old, 14 percent of the respondents said they had tried marijuana. Among adults, 16 percent said they had tried it. Just two years later, the figure for youth had jumped to 23 percent, and for adults, to 19 percent. To express it another way, at least one in every five teenagers has tried pot, and the trend is climbing. Though far fewer have tried heroin, the most sophisticated epidemiological research indicates that heroin is becoming more popular too.

Anyone trying to reverse this historic trend would quite naturally become discouraged. That is just what's happened to America's drug police. Consider the example of John Finlator. Until 1972 when he quit the government, Finlator was deputy director of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD), making him responsible for the daily operation of the entire US narcotics force. He left, he told me recently, because he didn't want to work any longer in an administration whose approach to the drug problem had become chaotic, highly politicized, superficial and riddled with hypocrisy. Finlator said that after Nixon gave the word that the "war on drugs" would be a major part of his 1972 reelection campaign, opportunists came to the force and pushed the experienced professionals aside. For the first time in his memory, drug enforcement agents were taking orders directly from the White House, usually in the person of Egil Krogh. Finlator said the professionals often found their decisions contradicted by the young whiz kids on Krogh's and John Ehrlichman's staff.

Millions of dollars were spent on Nixon's drug war, and quite a lot of it to publicize the crisis and the good work being done by the administration. In the days immediately preceding the election, Finlator recalled, he counted dozens of drug stories in *The New York Times*, many of them generated from within the White House. But after Nixon was reelected, "it was all over." The stories stopped. No one wanted to discuss drugs any more. The war had been won and that was that.

During the year the anti-drug campaign was at its most feverish pitch (1972), the volume of heroin available on the East Coast actually did decline. This prompted President Nixon to declare that the US had turned the corner on drug abuse—with his help, of course. But Finlator, like many other drug experts, remains skeptical. In a book published after he quit, called *The Drugged Nation*, Finlator wrote: "Panic, the word used when there is a scarcity of drugs on the market, has happened a number of times in our history. Whether panic is caused by effective law enforcement or failure of international traffickers to complete enough runs or events such as an East Coast dock strike, has never been effectively determined."

In retrospect, the 1972 heroin panic looks like a small dip in a great mountain of rising data that points to increasing use. Even if the panic was brought on by aggressive police action, it was so short-lived that it had a minimal impact on drug-taking habits. NIDA expects to publish in a month or so a report on the "indicators of heroin use" covering the last several years and giving a more balanced picture of this trend. Some of the data were gathered by federal drug agencies, some by the FBI, some by treatment centers, but all these disparate sources are unanimous on one point: there has been a gradual and unrelenting increase in heroin-associated incidents since 1966.

As this pattern was developing and after the drug war had been put away, the enforcement agencies turned upon one another and began a bitter internal war. It was triggered by Nixon's decision in July 1973 to carry out "reorganization plan number two," throwing together into one agency two groups of narcotics police that over the years had built up a strong tradition of animosity and distrust. These two tribes were the "narcs" of the Justice Department (the agents of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs) and the customs inspectors of Treasury. When they were tossed together in the salad bowl of the new Drug Enforcement Administration, they just wouldn't mix. The feuds that broke out continue to this day. Preoccupied by internal affairs, the agents lost interest in work and began competing with one another to blacken reputations; gradually they beat down morale to a new low. In the end the head of the DEA was fired and replaced by the current administrator, Peter Bensinger. Of course the policing effort lagged during this period.

Turning to the more academic world of the forecasters, it's possible to find signs that a new epidemic like the one of the late '60s is in the making. This year supplies of heroin are expected to be plentiful. Samples of "street buys" taken by the police show that when the Turkish-French connection was disrupted in 1971-1972, the demand for heroin was so great that a

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new Mexican connection established itself almost overnight. In 1972, according to enforcement data, 38 percent of the heroin in street samples was traceable to Mexico; by 1975 the figure had jumped to 90 percent. This is considered ominous for two reasons. First it indicates that there is a nationwide network for the first time smuggling drugs from Mexico to all the big cities—a network that will be far more difficult to police and intercept than the traditional trans-Atlantic one. Second, the trans-Atlantic network, after a period of quiescence, is about to reopen now because the Turks are permitting farmers to grow opium poppies again. The influx of this old-source heroin, according to the DEA, has not yet hit the market in a big way, but when it does it will produce a serious glut. The potency of street drugs will climb—which is another way of saying the price will fall. The police have already detected an increase in drug potency around the country, and San Diego, in particular, is said to be experiencing a spate of overdose deaths. Presumably this means that there are a lot of new, inexperienced users in San Diego, or else the old timers are getting unusually strong doses from inexperienced suppliers. Robert DuPont, administrator of NIDA, concedes that a new, more widespread heroin crisis is already upon us, and he says the signs are visible "everywhere."

Epidemiologist Leon Hunt, who has compared the spread of heroin use with the spread of contagious diseases in studies for a private group called the Drug Abuse Council, predicts a dim future for drug enforcement. Hunt, a mathematician, is convinced by his statistical work that the number of heroin users will continue to grow, and that the growth will take place primarily in towns and among social groups that haven't been exposed to the drug before. He believes that nothing the government does will alter the underlying epidemiological trend he has uncovered, and that it would make more sense to spend tax dollars on trying to understand and adapt to the changes than trying to prevent them.

Hunt's personal contribution has been to show that there was not one, but a series of heroin epidemics across the country at the turn of the decade. He traced the spread of the heroin bug like a disease, showing that when a community—defined by geographic, economic or social boundaries—is exposed to heroin for the first time by one of its peers, an epidemic occurs. As a scientist, Hunt wouldn't predict where the next epidemics will occur, but he did offer an unofficial guess. He said we will probably hear of addiction problems next in small cities (under 200,000 population) and in the higher social strata of the big cities. Around Washington, DC, for example, Hunt said there are signs of a shift in the types of people seeking treatment. Addicts wanting help are no longer primarily inner city blacks; increasingly they are whites from the beltway neighborhoods around the periphery of the city.

**COMING:** What to make of the Hiss and Rosenberg files—a report by Allen Weinstein

Hunt and his colleagues have established another startling fact, at least to their own satisfacton. This is that the overwhelming majority of heroin users are not addicts at all, but occasional users, or "chippers." The most common estimate is that only 10 percent of users are addicts, meaning that there are actually about four million people in the US who use heroin from time to time, only 400,000 of whom can properly be called addicts.

Hunt and Dr. Norman Zinberg of Harvard set out to find some of these chippers, interview them and study their habits. After placing ads in the Boston papers and gathering a file of confidential interviews, the researchers decided that heroin users don't differ in their habits very much from other drug users, whether they be drinkers or pot smokers. They believe that the majority of heroin users have an ability that addicts lack to "develop significant and consistent social use patterns that permit use and at the same time act to limit the amount of use . . . " And they concluded that "controlled use of opiates is possible and is carried on by large numbers of people, although they are very hard to locate, and that controlled users are more clearly differentiated from compulsive users by their ability to develop and maintain social rituals around use than by drug availability, personality family background [or] other variables." The new findings don't suggest that heroin is safe, but rather that it's already being used by a widespread, stable and large population in the US. The market is huge and very profitable. How many police would it take to smash a black market that delivered, say, cigarettes to four million people? One hundred? A thousand? Five thousand? No one really knows, but the DEA's force of agents is clearly inadequate for the job of busting the heroin trade. Heroin is easier to conceal than most contraband, and far more profitable.

Precisely because it's impossible to smash a black market of this size, the US government has recently tried some odd and expensive methods of control. Nixon convinced the Turks to stop growing poppies for a year, and in the process, helped create a shortage of medical opiates. Facing a potential second crisis this year, President Ford is trying to beef up customs enforcement along the Mexican border and goad the

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Mexican police into action. The US has persuaded the attorney general of Mexico to assign a special squad working out of his office to combat the drug trade, given him helicopters, guns, herbicide spraying equipment and apparently some special personnel. There are signs that even the CIA has been talked into helping out in the new anti-heroin war, which is a switch from past policy. One hopes for the best, but the record of such campaigns isn't bright.

**Eliot Marshall**

## To Gain Early Momentum in a Crowded Field

# Courting Mississippi

## by Ken Bode

*Philadelphia, Mississippi*

There were two stories worth reporting out of last month's Mississippi precinct caucuses. One was the test of former Georgia Gov. Jimmy Carter's highly regarded campaign organization in the heart of Wallace country. The second, and more interesting, was the largely successful effort to patch up the 12-year-old schism in the Democratic party here.

Since 1964, there have been two separate Democratic parties in Mississippi. That was the year of Mississippi summer, when hundreds of northern civil rights workers descended on the South, primarily Mississippi, to work in voter registration programs. It was also the height of the modern resurgence of the Imperial Order of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

The party split in Mississippi can be traced to a night in mid-June of that year when about a dozen Klansmen gathered a few miles from this rural crossroads county seat, outside the Mt. Zion Methodist Church where they had been led to believe a young, white civil rights activist from New York City was meeting with Neshoba County blacks as part of an effort by a coalition of organized labor, blacks and liberal whites to send a challenge delegation to the Democratic National Convention later that summer under the banner of the Mississippi Freedom Democrats (MFD). It turned out that the Klan had to wait a week to capture and murder Michael Henry Schwerner and his two co-workers James Chaney and Andrew Goodman, for there were no MFD meetings in Neshoba County. But the attention drawn to Philadelphia, Mississippi by the brutal Klan killings shocked the nation and made it all but impossible to rebuff the Freedom Democrats' claims at the Democrats' convention in Atlantic City. The MFD was given only two honorary seats on the Mississippi delegation, a compromise that satisfied no one, but the rest of the delegation walked out, and the offended Regulars have not seen the inside of a Democratic convention hall since.

Four years later, the Mississippi Loyal Democrats, successors of the MFD, won full national recognition at the Chicago convention and have since been Mississippi's exclusive representatives in national party councils. Meanwhile, the Regulars have continued their total domination of state politics and government. At each convention since '64 there has been a credentials challenge, and each year the racially mixed Loyalists have strengthened their hold at the national level. In 1972, the Regular's challenge was turned back without one dissenting vote.

Nevertheless, both factions recognize that each has something the other needs, and there have been abortive efforts to settle their differences. Four years ago, as the precinct meetings approached, the Loyalists drew up a set of "negotiating points" intended to forge political compromise from each side's strengths and weaknesses. Bargaining the national credentials of the Loyalists against the state-level control of the Regulars, they hoped to gain a share of state power for blacks in traditionally one-party Mississippi.

The Loyalist's negotiating points included provisions for:

1) A single state party executive committee equally divided between Loyalists and Regulars that would serve as an advisory board for all appointments to state boards, agencies and commissions and for all federal patronage in Mississippi, including federal judgeships and postmasters.

2) A merger of the two factions under the Loyalist national party-approved constitution, with county executive committees of the unified party based on the racial division of each county.

3) Endorsement and active campaigning for a single-member district legislature. Members are now elected on a multi-member basis which dilutes minority voting

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strength and holds down black representation.
4) A national convention delegation meeting the party rules for representation of women, young people and racial minorities, and a promise that all members of the delegation would support and campaign for the national ticket.
5) Hiring of blacks in state jobs in a ratio of 2-to-1 over whites until equality is reached and a promise (by the then Gov. William Waller) to respect the integrity of existing anti-poverty agencies in the state, allowing them to retain effective control of their programs.

The 1972 efforts to forge unity were elaborate, breaking down only after each faction had fully selected separate national convention delegations. Gov. Waller ultimately depicted the Loyalist negotiating points as "demands," and the two factions found themselves on opposite sides of an expensive legal battle and another credentials contest.

The specifics of this year's unity effort are being negotiated almost entirely in private, with the leaders of each side making symbolic public gestures of trust while confining specific negotiations exclusively to the back room. Newly elected Gov. Cliff Finch, for example, has appointed Loyalist Chairman Aaron Henry as an honorary Colonel on his staff. Representatives of the Loyalists privately assure that this year's agenda for unity is not substantially different than the one four years ago and that they will bargain hard—but only after both sides have taken the first steps in good faith, not before. Meanwhile no one will mention specific elements of the potential compromise, fearing that any publicity might jeopardize the joint precinct caucuses set for last week.

The early days of these negotiations were sticky enough. For example Regulars were unhappy with that segment of the Loyalist rules providing that delegates and alternates to the precinct, county, district and national conventions must be equally divided between men and women. For a time it appeared that the overwhelmingly white Regulars might have to attend the Loyalist precinct meetings in black churches and fraternal lodge halls, locations that would have certainly diminished support for George Wallace.

However at the urging of Loyalist leaders and Gov. Finch, who had been in office only three days, each side gave a little and the meetings were held under Loyalist rules and in state-designated polling places. In 2141 precincts, Mississippi's two Democratic parties took the first steps toward picking a national convention delegation, mostly together. However there were some reports of faltering.

Here in Neshoba County, the Regulars' executive committee decided not to cooperate, to hold separate meetings under a set of rules not recognized by the National Democratic Party. In some precincts, well-meaning representatives of the two factions were able to patch things up on the spot; where they could not, the result was usually a loss of support for Wallace, the candidate evidently most favored by rank and file Regulars.

In the Mississippi National Guard Armory just outside Philadelphia, for example, the Regulars in the meetingroom voted 15 for Wallace to one for Carter. Caucusing separately out next to the rifle range, a group of black Loyalists met with a handful of whites determined to end the party split and voted eight for Shriver, three for Wallace and two uncommitted. None of the Wallace Regulars inside would fill out the Loyalist party pledge cards, and none of their votes will be counted for Wallace at the county conventions on February 14.

At his caucus in the town of Raymond, former Gov. John Bell Williams, a long time foe of the National Democratic Party, insisted that all references to loyalty to the party's platform and nominees be stricken from the pledge cards. His motion carried. Later, when the presidential poll had been completed, Williams moved that the cards themselves be destroyed and not sent up to the county conventions. Again he prevailed, thereby nullifying the effect of the entire meeting and assuring that neither his vote nor any other from his precinct would be counted.

This year was the first in recent times that seekers of a Democratic presidential nomination bothered with Mississippi. Delegations from here have traditionally been controlled by the state's political establishment and for the past few years, presidential politics was entirely submerged in the skirmishing between the two factions. One local editor observed that the last time anyone from the national scene cared enough to come was when Lady Bird Johnson's campaign train wound its way through the state in 1964. This year, five candidates competed actively—Bentsen, Carter, Harris, Shriver and Wallace—and their campaigning was encouraged by public assurances on both sides that the unity move was serious. Without that, no candidate would have risked much in the way of time or money in Mississippi.

These caucuses—which will culminate in the selection of 24 delegates at a state convention in February 29 indicate how important presidential candidates regard early momentum in a crowded field, and how much they are willing to invest to attain it. Traditionally mass media advertising is not regarded as worthwhile in nonprimary states. It is too expensive, too scattershot. Too few voters actually turn out compared to the number you pay to reach through newspaper, radio and especially television advertising, so most campaign strategists prefer to use their resources in ways guaranteed to reach voters directly—telephone banks, canvassing, mailings and the like. Nor do candidates themselves normally spend much time campaigning face-to-face in caucus states.

But this year's Democratic contenders have thrown that book away. Between them, the two principal

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competitors in Iowa in 1972, George McGovern and Edmund Muskie, spent a total of one and one-half days in the state. This year five candidates competing for support in Iowa's caucuses personally spent over 85 days there, invested over $170,000 and assigned about 90 paid staff to the state. Similarly, in Mississippi, Lloyd Bentsen, Jimmy Carter, Sargent Shriver and George Wallace each ran newspaper and radio ads and all but Shriver used television. For media alone, Bentsen spent $25,000. All the candidates, including Fred Harris whose effort was definitely low budget, stumped the state in the final week.

The losers, of course, were Bentsen and Carter. Bentsen began with the tacit support of the state's two US Senators, Eastland and Stennis, and outgoing Gov. Waller; he outspent the field and was so confident of success that he predicted he would win a third of the delegates. At this writing he has 1.6 percent. Bentsen's Mississippi campaign was headed by an Oklahoma public relations man who confided, "The last time I was in Mississippi was with the 101st Airborne when we took Oxford." In cautioning the press against his candidate's overoptimistic prediction, he added, "Remember, Sen. Bentsen started fifth in this state." And he finished fifth.

Jimmy Carter does not speak in conditional terms, a fact that sometimes shocks audiences unfamiliar with this trait. He does not say "if I am nominated"; he says "when I am President." Mississippi was the first test of Carter's unconditional claim that he will beat George Wallace in the South. He came to this state as the kind of candidate Loyalist leaders and moderate Regulars could agree on though many from the Regular faction—including Gov. Finch—chose to go uncommitted. He also had some momentum from his victory in Iowa. Demonstrating that they can do well in the North has never hurt southern politicians; it has been a specialty of George Wallace for years. Carter's radio spots proclaimed: "Last year, Jimmy Carter went to Iowa an unknown. This week Jimmy Carter left Iowa the overwhelming winner in Iowa's precinct caucuses." Nevertheless Carter got less than 16 percent in Mississippi. He lost three-to-one to George Wallace. It was as crucial a setback for him as Iowa was a victory.

George Wallace thrives on primaries and constantly berates caucuses as elitist devices. In his previous national campaigns, Wallace has participated reasonably successfully in only one non-primary contest, Texas in 1972. Mostly this failure has been chalked up to organizational problems; thus his performance in Mississippi—he now has better than 50 percent—is being touted as evidence that George Wallace has fully mastered the techniques of effective competition in caucuses.

Using Mississippi as one's only evidence, that conclusion is premature and overdrawn. The state has virtually no party apparatus—no precinct chairmen, no voter registration lists, not even a close estimate of the total number of registered voters. For most of the campaign, there was no solid basis to begin assembling a grassroots organization. Bentsen tried to appeal to the courthouse crowd, Shriver to black voters who benefited from OEO programs developed under his tutelage in the 1960s, and Carter had the support of some Loyalists, some labor and some public officials. But managers in each camp were confounded by the difficulties of organizing in a state where there is no party apparatus.

For Wallace, it was no obstacle. To be sure there was little indication of a serious grassroots organizing effort run out of the Wallace state office in Jackson. There, since mid-December Steve St. Amand, a 25-year-old native of Maine and former Muskie worker in 1972, manned a small suite of offices with three phone lines and two or three assistants. But from Montgomery, Alabama, each Wallace county chairman was provided an up-to-date list of his county's share of Wallace's 8000 to 9000 direct-mail contributors in Mississippi. With a total caucus turnout projected to be no more than 25,000-30,000 when all the votes are counted, that represented an enormous political base. Moreover the Wallace organization relied on the statewide network of private academies run by the White Citizen's Council to pass the word and turn out his caucus support. "They have the tom-toms going," said one Loyalist leader. "They'll turn their people out for Ole George." In the final days, over 20,000 postcards were also mailed from the national Wallace organization to contributors, to people on lists supplied by private school associations and members of hunting clubs telling each voter where and when the caucuses would be held.

Three days before the precinct meetings, Mississippi's last three segregationist governors Paul Johnson, Ross Barnett, and John Bell Williams held a joint press conference to endorse Wallace. "Jimmy Carter is nothing but southern fried Humphrey," said Williams.

Since any reluctance on the part of his supporters to participate in joint meetings with the Loyalists would obviously diminish his showing, the Wallace message in Mississippi was blunt: "Stop the Liberal Grab," said his newspaper ads. On television, there was no slick film footage to match Bentsen and Carter; it was George Wallace himself looking straight into the camera and telling his supporters if they wanted to help him, they had to go to the caucuses and—four times in 30

**COMING:** What Panama
learned from Cuba
about dealing with Gringos

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seconds—where and when the precinct meetings would be held.

It does not diminish Wallace's win in Mississippi to note that nowhere outside his own state of Alabama will he enjoy the same natural base and the same statewide organizational inheritance that he had here. So one should wait until the February precinct meetings are held in South Carolina and Oklahoma—where there are no networks of private school associations to turn out the Wallace vote—to conclude that this year's crackerjack caucus organization belongs to George Wallace.

## White House Watch

# Kissinger's Troubles

## by John Osborne

At eight o'clock on the morning before Secretary of State Henry Kissinger flew to Moscow for another try at negotiating an improved and extended agreement on strategic arms limitation with the Soviet Union, navy doctors examined him and found him in good health. It was one of the few bits of good news that the Secretary has had in quite a while. His wife Nancy was in the Bethesda Naval Hospital with a recurrence of ulcers that Kissinger blames largely upon the tensions arising from his multitude of troubles. "It's harder on her than it is on me," he said the other day. He returned from Moscow with less progress toward a satisfactory arms agreement than he'd hoped for. His conduct of the entire SALT affair since the interim Nixon-Kissinger agreement was reached in Moscow in 1972 was under severe and authoritative attack from such critics as former Deputy Secretary of Defense and arms negotiator Paul Nitze and former Chief of Naval Operations Elmo Zumwalt, Jr. His Middle Eastern policy of promoting step-by-step negotiation between Israel and its Arab enemies was subjected to similarly authoritative criticism by former Under Secretary of State George Ball in the current *Atlantic*. The leaders of that policy's presumed and principal beneficiary, Israel, felt that Kissinger and President Ford were pushing them too hard and too fast toward concessions that they thought excessive and dangerous. Overwhelming Senate and House votes to deny further funds for assistance to anti-Soviet factions in Angola constituted a crushing repudiation of Kissinger's and President Ford's view that "resistance to Soviet expansion by military means must be a fundamental element of US foreign policy" and justifies covert intervention in such places and situations as Angola. Recent and pending Senate and House committee reports on CIA and other intelligence operations, and a private suit in connection with wiretaps in the Nixon years, bring into question Kissinger's official competence and personal probity. These and other pressures, including differences with important figures at the Ford White House, stimulated speculation among some of Kissinger's closest and most devoted associates that he may quit or be driven from office before the year ends.

Something, in short, has happened and is happening to the Kissinger mystique. Without attempting judgment upon all the factors and issues that have entered into the erosion of Henry Kissinger's reputation and prestige, I offer here the best account of his situation, his state of mind and his prospects that I've been able to put together from recent interviews and conversations.

Henry Kissinger is in part a victim of what Bryce Harlow, a friend and servant of Republican Presidents since Eisenhower's time, calls "the McNamara syndrome," meaning the tendency in Washington and elsewhere to tear at and bring down public figures when and after they have been long and perhaps excessively admired, in the way that Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara was brought down and finally fired by President Johnson. Also and in part, Kissinger may be the victim of a changing world in which alliances lose their sanctity, national obligations once taken for granted come to be viewed and rejected as perils and burdens, and officials who have personified that sanctity and those obligations in the sense that Kissinger has personified them come to be distrusted and rejected, too. It is a world that Kissinger as historian would examine and explain with delight and brilliance but that he as statesman may be unable to comprehend and master with the skill for which he was so recently acclaimed.

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A suggestion that Kissinger may perceive himself and the current world in some such fashion comes from an official who has worked for him in Washington since 1969. According to this official, Kissinger in conversation with the few subordinates to whom he is really close takes "almost a Spenglerian view" of the western world and its prospects. The reference of course is to the late Oswald Spengler, another German by birth, whose *Decline of the West* impressed and (as it turned out) unduly depressed millions of people in the postwar 1920s. Kissinger is said in this version to view "the West" in his gloomier moments as a community in disintegration and probably beyond salvation.

My impression of Kissinger's view of his situation and the world is somewhat different. He appears to be principally concerned with what he considers the terrible damage recently done to US foreign policy and to the capacity of any President and of any Secretary of State to conduct an effective policy. He holds that the damage has been done by the intelligence investigations and disclosures; by the claim of Congress to responsibility and authority in foreign affairs that until lately were reserved to the Executive; and by the general slippage of confidence in public figures and institutions that has followed Watergate and Vietnam. The effect upon the non-Communist world—"the West"—of diminished American will and capacity to lead seems to worry Kissinger more than the present state and prospects of that world. My further impression is that Kissinger considers his own situation and prospects to be closely and importantly connected with the prospects for continued US effectiveness and leadership in the world. He seems neither to recognize nor to acknowledge the erosion of his prestige that has been cited here as a fact. He is said to believe that with his prestige at home and abroad he may be the only available person who can hold what's left of American policy and influence intact and functioning through 1976, during what he expects to be a period of continuing and possibly irreparable damage. He considers himself obligated to the country and to the world to hang on if he can at least until after the November election. After that, one gathers, he may feel free to quit an office that, as lately as April 1975, he was prepared and half hoping to keep through another presidential term.

A factor that I've yet to see or hear mentioned may enter. Elliott Richardson's recall from his ambassadorship in London to be Secretary of Commerce is usually interpreted as a way to place him in line for the Republican vice presidential or even presidential nomination this year. Richardson's first position in the Nixon administration was Under Secretary of State. His success in that job was due in part to his close relationship with Henry Kissinger when Kissinger was assistant to the President for national security affairs and William P. Rogers was Secretary of State. Richardson could be an acceptable successor to Kissinger as an interim appointee or as a full-term Secretary of State in the next administration.

Kissinger's chances of remaining at the State Department turn upon his standing with President Ford. When that relationship was last discussed here, the evidence was that the President retained total confidence in Kissinger and Kissinger remained confident that he has the President's confidence. That is still the basic conclusion but it has to be modified a little. Kissinger shares this observer's and others' wonder that Mr. Ford could be so obtuse as not to realize that his tolerance of potshots at Kissinger from the White House is bound to impair the Secretary of State's effectiveness with other governments. These continuing potshots take forms that are much more substantial than Press Secretary Ron Nessen's tendency—one that he has recently tried to suppress—to run down the Secretary of State. A mid-level official whose job extends across the foreign policy spectrum, from the State Department to the National Security Council, is convinced that in recent weeks Kissinger has been excluded from presidential and White House decisions that in the past would never have been taken without his knowledge and assent. Kissinger asks journalists and others on the White House fringe whether to their knowledge the potshotting is continuing. White House Counselor John Marsh, one of Mr. Ford's ablest assistants, has been noticeably less protective of Kissinger and of predecessors in the presidency than former Counsel Roderick Hills, now chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, was when he dealt for the President with the Senate and House intelligence committees. Since Marsh took over that responsibility, he has given Kissinger associates and some congressional staffers an impression that he doesn't care about what NSC and other documents provided to the committees do to Kissinger so long as Gerald Ford is not directly affected.

Kissinger encourages his immediate subordinates at the State Department and his former subordinates on the NSC staff in the view, common to most of them, that the loss of his White House title during the "Sunday massacre" last November, when the President demoted him and fired CIA Director William Colby and Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, did not significantly diminish the Secretary of State's control over the foreign policy process. How intelligent people could believe this is beyond my understanding. Kissinger is not among those who believe it, though he pretends to in the interest of sustaining his peoples' morale. His former deputy and successor as assistant to the President for national security affairs, Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, has certified Kissinger's continuance as chairman of the powerful Verification Panel, a group that reviews strategic armament matters, and expects soon to affirm his continuance as chairman of the Washington Special Action Group (WASAG), the

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inter-departmental committee that advises the President on how to handle emergency foreign situations. Kissinger is said to have been glad to relinquish the chairmanship of the Forty Committee, the group that passes upon proposals for covert intelligence operations, to Gen. Scowcroft. The standard wisdom among departmental and NSC staffs is that the two chairmanships retained by Kissinger preserve his control of the foreign policy process. Kissinger knows better. It was as assistant to the President that he developed and exerted the central command and authority, subject to the President, that he considered and still considers necessary for the effective formulation and management of foreign policy. In his judgment, he still has some of it but it's diminishing and at the present rate of erosion will be gone before the year is out. From the NSC staff standpoint, with a full-time assistant and a widely respected deputy assistant for security affairs, William Hyland, on duty at the White House, the system works better than it did when Kissinger went to the State Department and became a part-time assistant. That's not Kissinger's view.

It's premature to speak of Secretary Kissinger in the past tense. Whatever happens to him, however, this observer is reminded of what William Ewart Gladstone wrote in his old age about a friend of his early manhood, James Hope: "He possessed that most rare gift, the power of fascination, and he fascinated me."

# What to Do About The Palestinians?

## by Morton Kondracke

US Ambassador Daniel Patrick Moynihan held up his long right arm at the proper time last week in the United Nations Security Council, and Israel survived another onslaught from the Arabs. There are strong indications, however, that more severe tests are yet to come for the Israelis, both at the UN and in relations with the United States. It has occurred to the Syrians, who lead the Arabs in causing trouble for Israel, to resort to a new UN tactic—ironically, one invented by the United States—to pursue their declared goal of "besieging and isolating the Zionist enemy." At the same time pressures are building up in the United States—election year or no—to have the Ford administration move toward recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Although it cheered the Israelis, the Moynihan veto of a Security Council resolution on Palestinian national rights did not signal that this country stands four-square with Israel on the PLO. Standing by a bar off the Security Council chamber early in the debate, even Moynihan, Israel's favorite American diplomat, acknowledged that there was "space" between the US and Israeli positions that the Arabs could exploit if they chose. Back in Washington, high-ranking US officials said that this country would have had trouble casting a veto if the Arabs had been content to go just one step beyond present US policy and ask for a resolution recognizing the "legitimate rights of the Palestinian people" as a basis for peacemaking in the Middle East. The Arabs did not choose to be so moderate, hence, with the US veto, UN resolutions stand where they were and where the Israelis want them to be—recognizing the Palestinians as a refugee problem.

Toting up won-lost standings after the Security Council proceedings, Syria and the PLO came out with gains, if not clear victory. The United States came out isolated, but not utterly in the cold. The net loser, despite the US veto, was Israel. Whatever the justice of its case—and it is considerable—Israel lost propaganda points at the UN. It lost substantively, and it lost money. Instead of taking part in the Security Council debate to answer Arab charges, Israel boycotted. Before the debate started, Israel's foreign minister, Yigal Allon, threatened renunciation of the whole UN-supervised peacemaking process if so much as a phrase of existing Security Council resolutions was changed. During the debate, Israel's UN ambassador, Haim Herzog, took to holding press conferences outside the Security Council to denounce the proceedings as illegal and as part of a Syrian war plot. In fact, Herzog could be correct on both points, but his absence represented a

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reversal of Israel's position in 1974, when Israel expressed outrage that its former Ambassador, Yosef Tekoah, was *not* allowed to respond to Arab charges before the General Assembly. Israel lost substantively because it became clear during the debate that 14 of the 15 Security Council members—including Great Britain, France and Sweden—were prepared to vote for a resolution recognizing "political rights" or "national rights" for the Palestinians, implying that they favor eventual creation of an independent Palestinian state on Jordan's West Bank.

The United States alone was not willing to go that far and would have been utterly isolated if such a tame resolution had been presented for a vote. As matters worked out, Syria and the PLO demanded far more—including Israeli withdrawal back to its 1948 borders—and refused to accept language acknowledging Israel's right to exist. Even nonaligned countries couldn't go along with this and forced a watering-down of the resolution. In the final voting on a resolution recognizing full Palestinian rights to a national state and demanding Israeli withdrawal to its pre-June 1967 borders, the United States cast a lone veto, while Britain, Italy and Sweden abstained. The United States was not frozen out, as Soviet Ambassador Yakov Malik claimed, but as if to demonstrate it is not totally wedded to Israel, the Ford administration let it be known it planned to cut arms aid to Israel by $500 million next year. It took the step on the very eve of a visit by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

While Israel lost at the UN, the PLO and Syria gained. Even though it is a violation of the UN Charter to admit non-governments to take part in debate, the PLO was allowed to participate, with Syria as its sponsor. With a minimum of vituperation, the PLO's "foreign minister," Farouk Khaddoumi represented the Palestinians as a downtrodden people, forced out of their land by Israelis, anxious to return and live in harmony with the Jews. It may be nonsense—the Palestinian covenant still calls for dismantling Israel as a Jewish state, violently if necessary—but Khaddoumi got his chance to appeal to the world's underdog-lovers and made the most of it, while Israel appeared again intransigent.

It was left to the Syrians to play the role of Arab extremist, and they did, constantly referring to Israel as the "racist Zionist entity" and proposing resolutions even more outrageous than the PLO's. Syria's strategy was designed in part to embarrass Egypt, which has been making peace with the United States and Israel, but the Syrians have broader ideas, too. The Syrian strategy was spelled out last April in a resolution adopted by the Sixth Congress of the ruling Baath party. It says: "Active efforts and activities should be continued within the framework of the United Nations and its organizations and institutions for besieging and isolating the Zionist enemy and for the issue of resolutions in favor of the Palestinian cause and against the aggression in order to expose the enemy on an international level and its aggressive and expansionist nature and to consolidate the Arab right." In furtherance of the aim, Syria and its allies won passage of a number of anti-Israeli resolutions at last year's UN General Assembly, culminating in documents calling for creation of a Palestinian state and condemning Zionism as a form of racism.

Syria demanded a Security Council session to "implement" the General Assembly resolutions. The US veto blocked that, but the Syrians have discovered a way around the Security Council that the United States invented back in 1950, in the heyday of US power in the United Nations. At the right time, Syria could go so far as to get the General Assembly to sanction military action against Israel. Syria's device—Syrian ambassador Mouaffak Allaf brought it up on his own in an interview one day—is the "Uniting For Peace" resolution pushed through the General Assembly amidst the Korean war in response to repeated Security Council vetoes by the Soviet Union.

Ordinarily, the General Assembly is empowered only to pass hortatory resolutions with nothing more than moral force. The Security Council, where big powers have a veto, can impose sanctions or authorize force, as it did in Korea in 1950, when the Soviet Union was boycotting the Council. However the "Uniting for Peace" resolution—adopted after the Soviets returned and started vetoing again—declares that when the Security Council cannot achieve unanimity and "fails to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security," a special General Assembly session can be called. The Assembly can "make appropriate recommendations to members for collective measures, including . . . the use of armed force when necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security."

Should Syria wheel out the "Uniting for Peace" resolution—sometimes called the "Acheson Plan" after its inventor, former Secretary of State Dean Acheson—the United States surely would bellow that this was a violation of the UN Charter. Ironically that is exactly what its opponents said about it in 1950.

The possibilities here have not been overlooked by Israel. In another interview in New York, Pinhas Eliav, Israel's deputy UN ambassador, said that "the Syrian aim is to conduct political warfare to accompany a military assault. Using the 'Uniting for Peace' resolution would make it much easier to conduct operations against us under color of UN sanction. They are preparing the ground to have it appear a 'legitimate war.'"

What the Ford administration wants least is a war in the Middle East, legitimate or not. The entire basis of the foreign policy of Secretary of State Kissinger has been to avoid World War III, and of all the places that holocaust could start, the Middle East is the most likely.

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Kissinger's means of avoiding war is to push, squeeze and cajole the Israelis to give up what they have conquered in past conflicts. He has done it "step-by-step" in the past, getting land back for Egypt and Syria, but that procedure now seems to have run its course. Syria doesn't want any little pieces of land any more, and Egypt can't afford to make any more deals with Israel before Syria does. The only open channels for progress seem to be movement on the Palestinian issue or convening of a Geneva meeting to talk about a

## A Delicate Balance

For the moment, the fighting in Lebanon seems to be over. The Lebanese have paid a terrible price and demonstrated only their weakness. They have suffered, and the Syrians and the PLO have reaped the benefits. In effect Syria now exercises a protectorate over Lebanon, much as the French once did, though effective force is wielded by Syria's proxies, the gunmen and soldiers of the PLO. Israel will apparently acquiesce in the new Syrian role, so long as it stops short of actual military occupation. If Syria "protects" the Lebanese from renewed civil war, Israel guarantees what is left of their independence—a strange, delicate, not very stable balance.

Lebanon is to have a constitutional reformation in the new division of power between Christians and Moslems. From the standpoint of democratic principle, this reform is long overdue, but in the context of recent events it represents a serious and perhaps a disastrous defeat for the Christians. For months they have been defending an untenable position—because they believed that if they yielded at all they would be overwhelmed. They may yet be proven right. The compromise that the Syrians have proposed has the look of a temporary arrangement, a first step in the gradual transformation of Lebanon into a unitary Moslem state (and then its incorporation into a greater Syria). What is in question now is the staying power of Lebanese pluralism. There are after all Christian minorities in other parts of the Arab world, tolerated, like the Copts of Egypt, but without communal autonomy or political power. That is probably the model that many Moslem militants have in mind for the Lebanese. But it may not be in Syria's interest to push things too hard or too quickly in that direction. It's difficult to see any other power to which the Christians can look for help. The Israelis are sympathetic but can do nothing unless the Syrian army actually invades the country, and in Western Europe and the US, Lebanese Christians appear to have been written off, rather like the Kurds of Iraq.

It was the Palestine Liberation Army that apparently turned the tide of battle, opening the way for the Syrian peace initiative. This isn't the first time the Palestinians have been used in inter-Arab conflicts, but in this case they appear to have reasons of their own for intervening. One PLO spokesman described those reasons this way: "What we want in Lebanon is freedom of action . . . the right to use certain parts of Lebanese territory for armed action against Israel" (*New York Times*, Jan. 22). In fact, the Palestinians seem to have involved themselves in a major way in the day-to-day management of Lebanese affairs, and they have established military positions in areas far from Israel's borders. But if things quiet down in Beirut and the Bekaa valley, the Israelis must expect new trouble in the South. And now there can be little pretext of Lebanese sovereignty. For all practical purposes, Israel may soon have a frontier with the PLO.

The Palestinians were also concerned in the recent fighting to prevent the partition of Lebanon into Christian and Moslem states. Christian leaders are said to favor that solution, though they clearly lack the strength to enforce it. Most foreign observers argue that a Christian state would not be viable (though Mt. Lebanon, with a large Christian majority, was an autonomous district under the Turks). And a Moslem state would soon link up with Syria. So the proposal seems impractical. But the Palestinians have an additional reason for opposing it. "We are not willing," the PLO's Arafat has said, "to have another Israel in our Arab nation" (*New York Times*, Jan. 18). That is a strange statement, for a Christian Lebanon would, unlike Israel, be an Arab state. But it would not be a Moslem state, and that is apparently a crucial consideration. The Palestinians have their own Christian minority, and they talk of creating a secular democracy. But it is important to realize the strength that they and all the Arab enemies of Israel draw from Islamic militancy. The Lebanese civil war was a political intrigue, a clan feud, an ethnic conflict, a class struggle, a case of Syrian imperialism, but it was also and perhaps most importantly a religious crusade—and the role of the PLO in that crusade again demonstrates that it is not yet a moderate organization.

**The Editors**

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general Mideast peace settlement. Inevitably, even Geneva—or the informal, pre-Geneva Geneva that Kissinger has talked about—will have to confront the issue: what to do about the Palestinians.

In 1974, as revealed in the once-suppressed Israeli book *From Confrontation to Disengagement*, Kissinger warned Israel that it should talk peace with Jordan's King Hussein or face having to deal with the PLO. For domestic political reasons, according to the author of the book, Matti Golan, Prime Minister Rabin refused and, four months after Kissinger's warning, Arab leaders chose the PLO to replace Hussein as chief negotiator for the Palestinian Arabs.

Israel, having lost its chance to negotiate with Hussein then, now says it will negotiate only with Hussein, that it will have nothing whatever to do with the PLO, that it will wait out the PLO's moment in history, in hopes that Hussein will be called back into the picture. The PLO, however, does not seem to be leaving the picture. While the Lebanese crisis proved that PLO leader Yassir Arafat cannot control his own minions, it also established that Syria, which forced a Lebanon ceasefire using its own Palestinian troops, is a powerful factor to be reckoned with. And Syria insists that the PLO represents the Palestinians.

So the United States is confronted with the dilemma of what to do about the PLO. Once upon a time the United States agreed with Israel that the Palestinian issue should be settled in negotiations with Jordan. Later, that was represented as the "best" solution, but one does not hear even that case anymore. The US now is willing to negotiate with the PLO if it will abandon the use of force and acknowledge Israel's right to exist. If the PLO continues to refuse such concessions, will the United States recognize it anyway? There are a lot of people high in the Ford administration who think that will happen—indeed, who favor it.

If they had their way, one day *The New York Times* would report that US and PLO representatives had held, perhaps, "extensive, substantive discussions"—not negotiations, of course—and State Department spokesmen would acknowledge the fact, cautioning that no decisions had been reached. Another scenario for breaking the dike, one also under discussion in the administration, would be for the United States openly to favor an invitation to the PLO to participate in Geneva discussions.

Either move would unleash a storm from the Israelis, who have not come to the point of willingness to recognize a PLO that foreswore force and accepted Israel's existence. Former Israeli Information Minister Aaron Yariv has recommended this formulation, which would put the onus on the PLO to demonstrate moderation, but Rabin so far has been unwilling to go along. He is said to fear that even hypothetical expressions of Israeli willingness to deal with the PLO would amount to acceptance of the PLO's aim for an independent state in the West Bank, which Israel fears would be a Moscow-backed staging area for attacks within Israel. Even if PLO leaders were to say they will live at peace with Israel, the Israelis do not believe they'd mean it or be able to control those who wouldn't even say it.

By classic calculations of American politics, an election year would be the worst possible time for the United States to recognize the PLO. It would produce opposition in the American Jewish community, which speaks with strength greater than its proportion—six percent—of the population.

President Ford, judging by public and private indications from within the administration, is on a knife-edge about the PLO issue. His leading adviser on Jewish political matters, Max Fisher, is said to be telling him that American Jews are basically conservative nowadays and that, if he can get unemployment down and does not mess up on Israel, he can aspire to the same level of Jewish support—38 percent, high for a Republican—that Richard Nixon got in 1972 against George McGovern.

This advice probably won't make Ford hold back if he is of a mind to move on the PLO. For one thing, he expects Hubert Humphrey to be his Democratic opponent, and Humphrey is very popular in Israel and among American Jews. Humphrey captured 88 percent of Jewish voters in 1968 against Nixon.

Furthermore, in a statement that escaped general notice, Ford told NBC news recently that he would not allow any "ethnic pressure group" to influence his handling of foreign policy. Ford made the statement in connection with NBC's three-hour segment on US foreign policy, but it was excised, presumably because of time considerations, when the Ford interview was broadcast. Without mentioning Jews or any other group, Ford said, "I don't believe those pressure groups necessarily represent the American people as a whole. A President. . .has to look at the broader perspective and not necessarily. . .respond to those pressure groups that are well-intentioned but who have limited perspective.

"As we move ahead, we are going to try and predicate our foreign policy on the best interests of all the people in this country, as well as our allies and adversaries, rather than respond to a highly articulate, a very tightly organized pressure group of any kind.

"We cannot let America's policies be predicated on a limited part of our population or society."

It may be that Ford was thinking about Greek-Americans on the Cyprus issue, but the statement was very general.

Meanwhile one of Ford's highest-ranking aides said, "Like it or not, the PLO is a fact of life. They are not going to go away because Israel will not talk to them." This aide, and others in the administration, thinks a break might come this year, although Henry Kissinger and Ford have not spoken yet.

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# Arts and Lives

# Stanley Kauffmann on theater

## 1976, 1915

A new musical and a revival.

*Pacific Overtures* (Winter Garden), the new one, is one of the most exquisite textile exhibitions I've ever seen. The setting is Japan, and the costume shapes are what we would expect from prints and films, but the textiles chosen by or woven for Florence Klotz are beautiful, ravishing in design and texture. Klotz has often done costumes for Harold Prince, who produced and directed this show, but has never done better.

Boris Aronson, now unquestionably the oldest scenic designer at work in the American theater and a master, has done almost as well. In most of his work, which has ranged widely in style, Aronson has been able to pick a mode—the romanticism of *Fiddler on the Roof* or the constructivism of *Company*—and then fly. I feel that the canons of Japanese design have constricted him just a little. Nonetheless he has come up with such ideas as a permanent sky backdrop made of immense screens, instead of a seamless cloth, with white clouds on a light beige sky. Exhilarating.

Obviously if a review begins with comment on costume and scenery, the show itself lacks something. *Pacific Overtures* lacks so much that I want to emphasize its virtues which also include some spruce lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and a few adequate tunes by Sondheim delicately orchestrated by Jonathan Tunick. The opening number ("In the middle of the sea/We float"), which sets the quality of Japan before Commodore Perry's arrival, is lovely, well staged by Prince and well choreographed by Patricia Birch. What a show ought to follow that number.

But it doesn't. What we get is a desultory account of the transformation of Japan following Perry's visit in 1853, historically questionable and theatrically flabby, painfully straining to patch in various Japanese authenticities at the same time that it painfully strains for Broadway "numbers." In between the Kabuki snippets there are such items as a duet for two men walking through the woods and composing verses alternately or a duet for an old man and himself as a boy recalling a conversation he heard between Perry and Japanese officials. Both songs are cutely deadly.

Thematically the show has no base. Is it supposed to be telling us that the West ravished Japan? That Japan would still be a tranquil little (murderous) state if it weren't for the US? Hardly credible. Then is it just telling us about the changes of the last century? Pretty commonplace stuff—in Japan or Carpathia. Anyway, there is no protagonist of interest to follow, there is no drama other than hoked-up intensifications of inevitabilities. And since the women are played by men, in Kabuki tradition, there isn't even any sex appeal—particularly since all these men are homely! Musically—and an excellent score could make us forgive a lot—most of the songs, which ought to be the stars, are only serviceable background music.

The show gave employment to, I'd guess, half of the Japanese-American actors in existence. Only one of them is remarkable—Mako, the shaven-headed man who is the narrator and plays several roles. Not the least of his contributions is that he kept Yul Brynner out of the part.

In the career of Harold Prince *Pacific Overtures* is an unsuccessful episode but a concentric one. During that career, which has mostly been concerned with Broadway musicals, he has increasingly tried to bend big musicals to some kind of contemporary pertinence while still trying to make them hits. I'm not urging philanthropy. *Pacific Overtures* must have cost close to a million dollars. Some people had to put it up and naturally would like their money back, plus. I'm simply pointing out that, in recent years, social urges have been grafted on to organisms designed to make money, by college-educated Broadway and film and TV producers who want to feel culturally good at the same time that they knock out successes.

Prince, often with Sondheim, has produced shows derived from Ingmar Bergman and Kazantzakis and Sholom Aleichem and Plautus, has tried to deal with contemporary moralities and cultural shifts (*Company* and *Follies*), has drawn on avant-garde theater to resuscitate a previous failure (*Candide*). Sometimes he has tremendous hits, and who would wish him anything else? But he has become an epitome of the man who swims with one foot on shore and who, in our culture, sometimes gets swimming medals.

On the other hand, I can't say "on the other hand" about the old show. *Very Good Eddie* (Booth) was a smash hit of 1915, but it's not very entertaining today.

That reaction is complicated by the fact that, although it now seems a "straight" musical—quite the opposite of what interests Harold Prince—it was considered revolutionary in its time. It was one of the first "Princess" shows, intimate musicals created for the long-gone Princess Theater, capacity 299. Lehman Engel says in *The American Musical Theater* that, in this show and five other Princess shows that followed, Jerome Kern, the composer, and Guy Bolton, the librettist "put into practice ideas that were radical for the time: the songs and lyrics were integrated into the action; comedy material grew out of character and situation; the books had 'reasonable' and contemporary plots and characters; and the language of books and lyrics was everyday."

What must their predecessors have been? These songs are early Kern and, I'd say, too early: he had not yet developed more than a hint of the lovely melodic gift he lavished on musicals of the '20s and '30s. The comic bits are almost visibly inserted. The lyrics—by a number of hands including Elsie Janis

### Films Worth Seeing

*The Man Who Would Be King.* Kipling's rousing Indian tale filmed by John Huston with appropriate swash and buckle.

*One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest.* Jack Nicholson is tremendous in this dubious allegory set in a mental hospital.

*The Story of Adèle H.* Ravishingly well-made, but why did Truffaut distort the clinical history of Victor Hugo's demented daughter into a sad lyric?

*Swept Away.* Wobbly ending, otherwise sharp social-sexual comedy of rich woman and poor sailor cast ashore on desert island.

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and P. G. Wodehouse—may be all right but are largely incomprehensible in this production. Although the cast is miked—in a small house—I understood no more than half the lyrics. With my luck I had to hear, clearly, "Oh moon of love/High up above."

The songs being dull, the reasonably well-crafted farce book hardly saves the day. It deals with two newly-wed, mismatched couples who match themselves appropriately before the original marriages are consummated. All the principals are perfectly OK, especially Charles Repole who is a very good Eddie and Virginia Seidel, his soulmate though another man's bride. The show has a group of eight singers and dancers; they are all good and the girls are very good-looking. The dances, staged by Dan Siretta, are the best pleasure of the evening.

The worst clunks are the two comics, James Harder and Joel Craig, who chew through material that must have been usable fodder for skillful old-time vaudevillians.

Despite the pleasant moments and the general toy-like air, I was generally bored by the dull songs and unamusing maneuvers, and I was irritated by the audience. First, they picked up their cues like trained seals. Whenever a number—no matter how vapid—built to a finish that practically whipped out an "Applause" sign, they obeyed. Second, they obeyed not only out of the usual frenzy-and-coda response of musical audiences but out of the special obligations here of superiority. They were watching a quaint antique, and the Olympians of 1976 had to be nice to it.

For myself the chief interest was trying to imagine back, trying to imagine what it was like to take this show seriously as a revolutionary effort. I don't think the change is the old American-cultural standby of lost innocence: I think the difference between that first audience and this one is a different set of self-deceptions about sophistication.

# Reed Whittemore on television

## The Big Picture

TV has been with us about 30 years, and has changed our culture as much in that time as the movies and radio did in the 30 years before it. It has reduced reading and literacy, it has increased thumb-sucking and the glassy stare, and it has destroyed what little was left of the American community. What more could one ask of it? We can knock it but not ignore it. It is big, it stirs the multitudes in their slumbers, it sits in our parlors steadily steaming with its importance. And indeed it *is* important—and sometimes even good.

Yet what has it given us that is distinctively its?

Videotape, that's what. It has given us the grand privilege of watching every football play at least twice.

Oh yes, and it has given us "Sesame Street," a novel educational aid of considerable (once) punch that can still stir sleepy pedagogues to argument.

And that is all. Everything else that now composes the TV scene first had its innings in movies and radio. TV made more effective what it borrowed but it was as a borrower that it grew; it was an exploiter of the already known, rather than as an innovator, that it blossomed into overripeness before our eyes.

Radio had covered events live before TV but TV came along and made them liver.

Radio had created the Soap, but TV came along and learned to use radio Soap's most extraordinary contribution to the dramatic unities to make its *own* pile. The contribution?—time broken up into half hour blocks, and then broken up again into segments between which occurred the dropping of Alka Seltzer tablets into water glasses.

As for the movies, the movies had produced a drama that favored the close-up and featured careening horses rather than static parlor scenes framed by a proscenium arch. TV came along and

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grabbed both the proscenium arch *and* the careening horses—plus squad cars. It was able to straddle the world of both stage and film, and able to bring the two together into the parlor.

By the time that TV was through with its meddling, the forms and materials it meddled with were themselves changed—for TV cast a spell on everything it touched—yet the changes that it brought about were not so much due to its own creative ingenuity as to the simple enormity of its presence in American private life. Chiefly it brought public matters, national matters *into* the private life as nothing before it ever had. It brought into the parlor for example congressional hearings and big-time sports, and did so with a relentlessness that changed the whole character of these events, yet it created no new sport and devised no novelties in the hearing line (except perhaps the close-ups of victims trypng to talk privately with their lawyers, or of senators thinking suddenly they might make a run for the White House). TV remained content to play along with the genres and conventions around it. It did not even breed a new kind of critic but was satisfied with being battered about by traditionally patronizing highbrows (like this one) who earned their miserable wages being nasty about pop art.

In other words TV was, from the beginning, a conservative medium, experimenting rarely and discovering, when it did experiment, that experimenting was costly and that the critters watching in all the parlors didn't seem to *want* experiments. Instead they wanted what they knew already. They wanted bigtime football, but more of it, and every play twice. They wanted detective stories and Westerns and Soaps. They wanted friendly middle class faces with predictable accents and predictable neckties telling them, at enormous length, about the weather. And they wanted commercials every 10 minutes so that they could go to the kitchen and make a sandwich and clean up the dog vomit. All in all they wanted TV to help them achieve in their parlors the condition described in the old song, "Ain't Misbehavin." In that song the hero does not stay out late but sits abstemiously at home saving himself for a certain "you."

Who have our TV watchers been saving *them*selves for? Each viewer will have his own answer to that one, but from the evidence available about why people do plant themselves in the parlor and grow roots there, it seems likely that most of them would like to alter the question and say not who (or what) they are saving themselves for, but from. For TV is at heart a protective medium, keeping the watcher from mother, wife, husband, housework, homework, bills, thought, self. It is perfect in its demandlessness, perfect for those interested in neither misbehaving nor behaving, but just vegetating. Is such an interest bad? If so, most of us are bad at least part of every day. Anyway, TV's demandlessness has been, and remains, its chief vice.

But also, maybe, its chief virtue. The conservatism of TV requires of it that it give us the familiar, and the familiar has had a bad press for so long from the world of art and literature that the poor thing does need a medium of its own. TV is that medium and TV does not, or not always, do wickedly by it. TV not only does formula stuff to extinction but it moves in without embarrassment on materials sufficiently elevated to be graced by a grander word: the traditional. The traditional on TV may either be something incredibly cultural like three hours of "The Taming of the Shrew" to the beating of promotional drums, or something vaguely goody-goody for children like "The Swiss Family Robinson," but it can be good even when cultural, even when goody-goody. Also there is much to be said for having TV feel guiltily obligated to help the species it has itself endangered. So let us not complain about these ventures.

Then too, beyond the uplifting shows, and beyond the shows for children that the earnest campaigners against TV's violence and moronism can be called up about and urged to watch, there is another kind of essentially conservative, traditional show that TV is well capable of exploiting, and of exploiting well while remaining its old mean mercenary self, not trying self consciously to do any good at all but just make a buck. "Batman" was such a show, and now "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman" seems to be such a show. Parody, farce, flimflam, camp—whatever the genre should be called (and what it should be called varies because the shows tend not to *know* what they are) it is a genre that is only workable within a familiar world. It cannot be novel, it has to be about the known, the mundane, the everyday because its job is to ridicule some segment of the known, the mundane, the everyday. "Batman" went after a certain kind of inescapably, boringly available comic strip; "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman" is going after "All My Children" and the like. Neither show could have come into existence without their targets, and they are automatically limited by their targets' limits. "Batman" did all it could with its impoverished target in a relatively small number of shows (now being endlessly, sporadically repeated) and "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman" may similarly be expected to run out of steam fast unless it gets *serious* (or is it serious *now*? the question keeps coming up); but despite the limitations of each they do credit to, and well represent, their medium. Let us not complain about them either.

Other instances of TV's not always villainously conservative conventional heart could be hauled out here—and not complained about—but the point here is not to give instances but to mumble that for the next 30 years TV will probably have to continue to be judged, if it is to be fairly judged, largely by the conservative and conventional shows upon it, since they are the shows that best represent its role in our living rooms. The centrist role is the role we clearly *want* it to play, and it is the role that it therefore has to play, and it is a role that is needed among us, even though it sometimes shows us up with our shoes

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off and our minds let out for the night. Those who dream of TV giving itself over to a nest of gloriously imaginative innovators, or even of TV working to become a medium with its own distinct integrity, will have to keep dreaming. For better or worse the American parlor is still more ready for "Robin Hood" and "The Little House on the Prairie" than "Ulysses" or even "Sesame Street."

# Books Considered

## A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance by Martin J. Sherwin

(Knopf; $10)

In this disturbing and important book, Martin Sherwin soundly refutes the arguments of those who saw the dropping of the atom bomb as the first thundering salvo of the cold war as well as those who believed that Roosevelt's idealism and desire for accommodation with the Soviet Union would have mitigated its use. Drawing from newly available British and American sources, Professor Sherwin rightly focuses on the relationship between Roosevelt and Churchill as the key determinant in fashioning nuclear policy both for wartime and peacetime purposes.

To challenge the often-held thesis that FDR avoided power politics does not mean that Roosevelt did not want amicable postwar relations with the Soviet Union. But what Sherwin portrays is a skeptical rather than a naive President who was aware of the need to keep the grand alliance functioning, but who found himself far more in accord with Churchill's worldview than is generally realized. Despite Roosevelt's dislike of Britain's colonial empire and despite Churchill's espousal of a strong Gaullist France to maintain the continental balance of power, both envisaged the Anglo-American alliance as the cornerstone of the postwar order.

Moreover, possession of the bomb, both Roosevelt and Churchill believed, would give them valuable bargaining counters in dealing with the Soviet Union. Roosevelt, however, did not inform his top advisers about his private discussions with the prime minister. His two main scientific advisers, Vannevar Bush and James Bryant Conant, as well as Secretary of War Henry Stimson, were all kept in the dark as to the exact nature of FDR's commitment to the British on atomic energy policy. At Hyde Park in June 1942, the two former naval persons discussed atomic energy matters and, as Sherwin puts it, "Churchill left the country with the impression that Roosevelt was committed to an Anglo-American partnership." But when questioned by Stimson in October 1942 on what foreign commitments had been made to the British, Roosevelt answered vaguely. He had only talked with Churchill, according to Stimson, and "his talk was of a very general nature." The US scientists preferred a restricted exchange on atomic matters, and from the moment Churchill got wind of this sentiment, he struggled to overcome any such policy until, in September 1944, decisions between Roosevelt and Churchill were incorporated in an *aide-mémoire* signed at Hyde Park. At this meeting FDR committed Washington to full collaboration with London "after the defeat of Japan unless and until terminated by joint agreement."

In discussion with Churchill, Roosevelt clearly favored a concept of big-power domination after the war. And if there were to be four policemen, as FDR wanted—the United States, the United Kingdom, the USSR and China—only two of them would have the bomb. For, central to both Roosevelt's and Churchill's thinking was that Russia should not be informed of the existence of the Manhattan Project to develop the atom bomb. While FDR was also less worried than Churchill about Russia's postwar designs, he seemed to feel that if "the bomb could be used to create a more peaceful world order," the threat of its power would be more effective than "any opportunities it offered for international cooperation." Clinging to this belief, Roosevelt rejected schemes of the Danish scientist Niels Bohr for inviting Soviet participation in postwar atomic energy planning "before the bomb was a certainty and *before* the war was over." As for Bohr's proposals for initiating an international control agreement with Moscow, the *aide-mémoire* stated: "The suggestion that the world should be informed regarding [the atomic bomb], with a view to an international agreement regarding its control and use, is not accepted."

Roosevelt kept his advisers ignorant of the Hyde Park accord. Meanwhile Secretary Stimson wrestled with the problem of postwar control of the bomb. To Stimson what was important was obtaining Soviet cooperation; but before he would disclose any information about the bomb to the Russians, he wanted to have some *quid pro quo* from Moscow. When he presented this view to FDR, the President agreed.

This was the situation Truman confronted when Roosevelt died in April 1945. However Truman also inherited the legacy of FDR's ruse and secrecy that were to bedevil the new President's relations with both friend and foe. The extent of FDR's commitments to Great Britain were not clearly explained to the new President; nor were the ambiguities of Yalta. For Truman, unsure of himself and by temperament preferring advisers with strong, clear-cut opinions, the legacy meant no sharing of atomic secrets with Russia, using the bomb against Japan (a decision never seriously questioned by Roosevelt's top advisers), and the diplomatic leverage possession of the bomb apparently gave him once it had been exploded for all to see.

Stimson, in briefing Truman about the Manhattan Project, was cautious in spelling out how the bomb should be "properly controlled" in peacetime. Truman may well have discounted this aspect precisely because he was more at ease with those advisers, such as James Byrnes, who took a less subtle approach to diplomacy than did Stimson—the most determined advocate of international control of atomic weapons before Potsdam.

What Truman believed he held as a result of the success of the bomb was diplomatic leverage over the Soviet Union. And with Roosevelt's death, the commitment FDR made to an American-British nuclear partnership ended. Unaware of this part of the inheritance, the new President pursued his quest for Russian cooperation with an American hand. Stimson's Interim Committee, appointed by Truman to formulate atomic energy policy, made its report just prior to Potsdam: it confirmed the decision to use the bomb against Japan and made it clear that the UK could no longer rely upon the special relationship Churchill had with Roosevelt.

The principal reason for using the bomb was certainly to end the war. It was not dropped in order to threaten the

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Soviet Union. But Truman, Byrnes and Stimson, in Sherwin's words, "consciously considered two diplomatic effects of a combat demonstration of the atomic bomb: first, the impact of the attack on Japan's leaders, who might be persuaded thereby to end the war; and second, the impact of the attack on the Soviet Union's leaders, who might then prove to be more cooperative." Revisionist historians, such as Gar Alperovitz in his book, *Atomic Diplomacy*, have wrongly asserted that the bomb was used chiefly to force the Russians to accept an American design for world order. All of the President's advisers still believed in the continued will of the Japanese to fight on and were committed to the formula of "unconditional surrender."

Unless the Japanese had publicly accepted unconditional surrender prior to Hiroshima, it seems virtually impossible to conceive of Truman acting in any other manner. Sherwin spells out clearly the diplomatic use of the bomb as Truman saw it at Potsdam. The President, Sherwin writes, "had no intention of employing the bomb explicitly as an instrument of diplomacy during the conference, but a successful test would assure him at the very least that he need make no politically embarrassing concessions there." In fact the bomb was ineffective in modifying Soviet foreign or domestic policy as Truman and Stimson, in their different ways, hoped it would.

Using newly declassified information, Sherwin has produced a balanced and fascinating account of the wartime development and use of the atom bomb; we can look forward to his succeeding volume, now in preparation, on the role of atomic diplomacy during the first phases of the cold war. Reading *A World Destroyed* reinforces one's belief that good intentions usually give way to power politics. We live in a world where, as the 17th-century philosopher Thomas Hobbes put it, there is a "generall inclination of all mankind" toward a "perpetuall and restless desire of Power after power, that ceaseth only in death."

**James Chace**

*James Chace* is managing editor of *Foreign Affairs*.

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## A Peace Denied
by Gareth Porter

(Indiana Univ. Press; $15)

First the *Mayaguez* affair and now the Angola crisis are fair warnings that we should plant firmly in our minds the main outlines of the American intervention in Vietnam before the unpleasant memory fades. The details of the secret commitments, disguised escalation, false official reporting and contrived public relations arguments that victory was essential and turning back was unthinkable—all those manipulative devices that were used to keep the Indochina war going one way or another for 15 years are worth considering because a new President with an open face and an open manner has already shown that he could at least start down the same trail.

Gareth Porter already had made his name as an anti-war scholar. At Cornell, and later as director of the Indochina Resource Center in Washington, he documented the course of the war, the strung-out negotiations intended by the United States to maintain an anti-Communist government in power in Saigon no matter what, and the "cease-fire war" that followed the Paris agreement of 1973. Almost single-handedly, he destroyed the "blood-bath" myth used effectively by Presidents Johnson, Nixon and Ford, as well as Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, to persuade many Americans that a Communist victory in Vietnam would mean automatic massacre.

Porter's scholarship and his careful habit of putting two and two together produce enlightening insights. For example he shows that Dean Rusk's 1967 warning that the United States must hold the course in Vietnam because in the next decade or so there would be a billion Chinese armed with nuclear weapons was more than an off-hand remark. Porter notes that five more speeches by administration spokesmen in the next two weeks pointed to the threat of an "aggressive" China. With the cost of the war in money and lives rising steadily, and with increasing doubt whether the American people would stand for it much longer, the Johnson administration had turned to the "Yellow Peril" as a tried and true specter to bolster home support.

Porter's main purpose is to correct the public record and show why diplomacy failed to bring peace in Vietnam. To do so, he puts the Paris talks and their aftermath in terms of basic policies of Washington, Hanoi and Saigon going back two decades to the Geneva agreement of 1954. He shows that the press distorted the failure of the Paris agreement of 1973 by the standard journalistic technique of "balanced" reporting, which often maintained a stance of objectivity by telling of violations by both sides while avoiding analysis of the underlying interests of the parties and the dynamics of the situation. Free of this pressure—and with the advantage of hindsight—Porter does not hesitate to lay the blame for the long war and the faulty peace on Johnson, Nixon and Ford, determined as they were to maintain their client regime in Saigon. Vietnam's Communist leaders, on the other hand, stood to win in a fair political contest and had an interest in making the treaty work.

One of his unexpected findings is that it was Nixon, not Nguyen Van Thieu, who sabotaged the October, 1972 agreement and threw off the schedule of signing the cease-fire before the November 7 election. The Nixon administration version and the conventional belief has been that Thieu balked at several provisions, notably a tripartite electoral commission, which he feared would develop into a coalition government, and the concept of a cease-fire in place rather than the withdrawal of North Vietnamese as well as US troops.

Instead, Porter says, it was Nixon who decided to put off the signing of the agreement until after the election. He contends that Nixon was unwilling to risk a pre-election charge by Thieu that the United States was betraying his government's anti-Communist struggle. He argues further that Nixon

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was thinking of the US plan to turn over huge additional stocks of planes and tanks and other weapons just before the cease-fire, so that Thieu would start on a higher plateau with the one-for-one weapons replacement permitted in the agreement and would be better prepared to defend himself after the US withdrawal. According to Porter's account, Nixon had decided on the delay even before Kissinger went to Paris in mid-October and encountered Thieu's strong objections. Thus Thieu's opposition was not the cause but the occasion for delaying the signature, and Kissinger's headline-making remark on returning to Washington that "peace is at hand" was doubly deceptive.

Thieu's objections were, of course, very real. To persuade him to sign a slightly revised agreement even after the US elections required Nixon's secret promise to send back the US bombers in the event of a major Communist violation, the massive Christmas bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong to give weight to this pledge, and a threat by Nixon to cut off US aid and sign a separate peace with Hanoi unless Thieu signed the pact.

Next comes the story of why the main political provisions were never implemented and the cease-fire was never enforced. It comes as fresh history, because most Americans long ago grew cynical about the war and everything connected with it and assumed that the Paris agreement was never even intended to work and that it was merely a device for turning South Vietnam over to the Communists. Kissinger had fed this belief by his frequent statement that all the United States had to have was a "decent interval" between US withdrawal and a Communist takeover.

What promptly developed was a parallel effort by Thieu and the United States to misrepresent the terms of the agreement, particularly its central provision that recognized the Provisional Revolutionary Government, the political arm of the Communist side in the South, as a legitimate political entity. According to the agreement, the PRG and Thieu's Republic of Vietnam (RVN) were to have equal status as "the two South Vietnamese parties," to keep the peace, "achieve national reconciliation and concord," and plan for national and local elections. Instead Thieu told his people even before the actual signing that the agreement was "solely a cease-fire agreement, no more, no less," and that "in South Vietnam there is one legal government."

Porter shows that Thieu's all-out resistance to the terms of the agreement should have been expected. His regime depended for its survival on the military control of society and restrictions on democratic freedoms stemming from the shooting war. He had an overriding interest in keeping the fighting going, denying legitimacy to the PRG and eventually provoking the United States to resume the bombing attacks. Nixon, on the contrary, had a perfect opportunity to get the United States out of Vietnam once and for all. The United States had reached a compromise settlement that gave Thieu a chance to compete with the Communists in a postwar political test. Nixon could have complied fully with the agreement and leaned on Thieu to comply as well. As Porter puts it, the Nixon administration "could have transformed the American role from one of destroying and dividing a society to one of healing not only the physical wounds of war but its social and political wounds as well." Rather than remaining Saigon's patron and sponsor, the United States would have become a detached guardian of the peace, with Saigon as a dependent but no longer a client.

But this, too, was out of the question. Nixon had kept the war going four more years to avoid giving the PRG an equal chance in a political contest for South Vietnam's future. Instead of breaking off the parton-client relation with Thieu, he announced that the United States would "continue to recognize the government of the Republic of Vietnam as the sole legitimate government of South Vietnam." To carry out this policy, and its implication that the United States would continue the war by other means, the Nixon administration sent in several thousand military technicians—many of them recruited directly from the military and officially "retired" for the purpose—as the last American troops were being withdrawn.

Porter presents a persuasive analysis showing that Thieu maneuvered constantly to prevent the elaborate peacekeeping machinery from being put into action and that the final Communist offensive came only after systematic cease-fire violations by the Saigon side. In fact the sweep down the coast to Saigon was actually a response to the collapse of Thieu's forces rather than a planned campaign. A key factor was the congressional decision cutting off all bombing of Cambodia and prohibiting


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further military action in Indochina without prior congressional authorization. Nixon was so weakened by the unfolding Watergate scandal by that time that he did not dare defy Congress.

The chain of events leads inevitably to Porter's final conclusion, which should be America's final lesson and memory of its Indochina adventure: "The conflict ended in complete military victory for the PRG rather than in a negotiated solution, because the United States refused to adjust its policy to the new balance of forces reflecting the fact that the United States clearly would not again intervene with air power in Vietnam. Kissinger and Nixon refused to use their power to force a political change because they found it more compatible with both domestic political needs and foreign policy objectives to lose militarily while playing the 'good ally' than to actively seek a political solution to bring an end to the war."

**Richard Dudman**

*Richard Dudman*, Washington bureau chief of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, covered the Indochina war from Saigon, Hanoi, Phnom Penh and the Communist-held jungles of Cambodia.

## The China Hands by E.J. Kahn, Jr.

(Viking; $12.50)

How many of us noticed the press reports of the luncheon held at the State Department, January 30, 1973? There, at last, public recognition was given that the outrageous treatment of dedicated public servants during the McCarthy years of the Cold War, should be confessed and apologies tendered. The luncheon was sponsored by the Foreign Policy Association. The guests of honor were the "China Hands" who had, for 20 years, been pilloried and hounded, by McCarthy and McCarran in the '50s and after that by their successors on congressional committees and their cohorts in that amorphous group known as the China lobby. John Service, one of the four who had suffered the most (the careers of John Carter Vincent, John Davies and O. Edmund Club were also destroyed) was the featured speaker. All present at the luncheon would have agreed that the point of this meeting was well made by the statement: "it is not in the interest of the Foreign Service or the United States that career officers become subject to retribution for diligent execution of their instructions." E.J. Kahn has heightened the irony of it by quoting from this statement of the press secretary of Richard Nixon.

This anecdote epitomizes the fascination—and the frustration—for the reader of Kahn's book. At times it rambles; at times the author is snide in his remarks, but he pursues relentlessly his task of laying bare the enormity of the errors, yes, the sins, of those at the highest levels of the American government who chose political expediency and destroyed men and their careers rather than face the fact that China was not ours to lose.

Some of the wrongdoers are starkly etched on our minds by their lack of integrity. John Foster Dulles, whose unrelenting anti-communism led him to play fast and loose with people's lives and with the facts of history, twisted the knife in the back of John Carter Vincent when he forced him to resign. The press release regarding Vincent's firing quoted Dulles' "conclusion that 'I do not believe that he can usefully continue to serve the United States as a Foreign Service Officer.'" At almost the time the press release was issued Dulles was meeting privately with Vincent and saying "I want to use this opportunity to ask the Minister some questions about China. After all he knows the situation there better than just about anybody."

Patrick Hurley, Roosevelt's emissary to China, too, is a villain of sorts, but one could say that he didn't know any better. The picture of Hurley which Kahn paints is lurid and devastating. Hurley's role in the destruction of men's professional lives was important, but equally important was the role of Gen. Albert Wedemeyer. His post-Marshall mission report in 1947 had been sobering and reasonably objective but by the early 1950s he was talking very differently. He lent the weight of his name and prestige to the work of McCarthy and the China lobby, directly contradicting the judgments contained in his report. I have always felt that this turnabout was one of the most disgraceful footnotes in our post World War II history.

The China Hands were the victims of the national orgy of McCarthyism. There were villains aplenty, as noted, but were there any heroes? I can remember questions that came to me day after day in the early '50s when I was living and working in Asia. "What is wrong with democracy in the United States? Why do you let that man McCarthy go on unchecked?" What could one say? The timid and the weak keep silent and others demand strong arm methods. But there were heroes and men of principle, too.

The one I have known best is John Fairbank. Kahn refers to him frequently but, since he was only scarred, not destroyed, he is, perhaps, easy to overlook. Few people realize how bitter and deep the wounds were. As a scholar and as a devoted public servant Fairbank has known how wide and devastating the destruction of McCarthy and the China lobby was. As one of his students in the mid-'50s I had occasional glimpses of the scars he bore. Yet never to my knowledge did he swerve in his commitment as a scholar to establish the facts and assess the truth as impartially as he could. In the years of the Vietnam debacle some voices on the left raised a hue and cry for his scalp as those on the right had 20 years before. I had disagreed with him and others in the East Asian Studies "establishment" over East and Southeast Asian policy for some time but I was saddened to see how little we had learned as I heard those voices. The means still *do* determine the end and those who would destroy other's careers or reputations in the interest of a cause that is "right" lack the integrity that may be man's major claim to humanity.

*The China Hands* will tell some people more than they want to know about US policy at home and abroad in the late '40s and early '50s. For others it will provide a nostalgic, and at times, infuriating journey into the past. It puts on the record for all to read one of the bittersweet stories of the 20th century.

**Jackson H. Bailey**

*Jackson H. Bailey* is professor of Asian history at Earlham College.

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## Northern Lights by Tim O'Brien

(Delacorte Press/
Seymour Lawrence; $8.95)

Anyone who's spent much time in a small town is bound, like it or not, to be on familiar terms with the dump. For the literary-minded it's a positive privilege to get to drag a few bags of kitchen flotsam over the edge just to watch it mingle intimately with the neighbors' and stranger's jetsam and speculate on the miscellaneous history of landfill: instant piecemeal geology.

Tim O'Brien, more than familiar with a town in Minnesota's Arrowhead country which he calls Sawmill Landing, brings the four central characters in *Northern Lights* to the junkyard on an idle winter evening for the petty thrill of shining their headlights into the trash. "An old scene, nothing better to do. . . . Catch a rat in forage? Watch his eyes sparkle at the inexplicable new sun? Catch a bear? Catch a starving moose in small-town garbage?" Perry (whose consciousness this is) "imagined the old days. Swedes dumping their rusted broken plows, then the Finns and Germans, layers of accumulated junk piled in a vertical graveyard like the strata of some ancient civilization, the town's history now being rummaged by night creatures sniffing at ghosts. It was an ambush, all right. Lanterns and midnight voices. He grinned at the thought. They'd all been together too long. Waiting in a small-town junkyard. He remembered carting truckloads of his father's trash to the junkyard after the October funeral. Open graves."

Paul Perry, a man of untested solidity, who lacks charisma, who thinks himself into a thousand corners but without intellect or drive or self-respect, is egged on by his bull of a brother, Harvey, and his brother's randomly cruel girlfriend, to try to kill the rat they've startled with their "shining." For reasons that are mostly to his credit, Perry can't do it, not there and then, without purpose, and not under the mocking eye of his macho brother and the girl Perry wishes he could have.

There is a refrain in this surprisingly beautiful book that recurrently reminds us that what we are studying is "partly a combination of human beings and events, partly a genetic fix, an alchemy of circumstance." Granted there is nothing that is otherwise; but what O'Brien manages to do is to place his interlocking characters so deeply in their family, their time and place, their bleak lumber town islanded in forest, at some moment during the Vietnam war (which sends home its dubious heroes, like Harvey, who is missing an eye, in flight from their memories) that his book could stand very honorably as an unsensational and sensitive introduction to American "provincial" life for any foreigner who wants one. Yet it is never for an instant sociology: all the tracks lead inward.

The scene in the dump is a perfect emblem of O'Brien's preoccupations: idleness—emotional idleness this is, not the kind that can be assuaged by a local Job Corps; free-floating energy and frustration; a baffled search for some arena in which to fight heroic battles, public and private, sibling, sexual, generational. There is no approved ambition which can contain the force of these emotions, not in the town square under the light of day. Harvey and his girlfriend are forever planning their escapes, to Africa, to "the badlands" just north of them, but since they have no intention of going anywhere, the circles of repartee get narrower and narrower, and they end in the sordid dead-end of the dump, cruising where "the headlights flowed through the trash like a white river" and someone can always be solicited to the side of random brutality, "a popular pastime," and made to feel like a failure for resisting. But the "genetic fix" is in, as far as Perry is concerned, and he's the born loser. Page after page the petty torment and irritation, a vague chafing of dream against reality, continues, and it is never melodramatic but perfectly situated in tone between the inconsequential life of Sawmill Landing and the harsh eye of an eternal sky and the pitiless weather.

The Perry brothers are pinned against the invisible backdrop of eternity by the memory of their father and his father, who were "preachers of the elements," of apocalypse, "forest fire, death in the snow, a new Ice Age," and, living where they did, the "ultimate prophecy of doom . . . always rooted in stories of present suffering. . . . (they) could never be faulted for poor vision nor accused of promising too much." Finnish, the grandfather's heroic symbol was the Bull of Karelia, "a moose with antlers gone and head down in the dead of winter," a local and yet an infinite symbol of humbled endurance. (The father's has changed with the times: he has commanded his sons to build him a 20th-century ark, a concrete bomb shelter in the backyard. All this is more heavy handed than it needs to be: by the end of the book the brothers are about to accept an offer on their old house from a man who plans to use the shelter for an art studio.)

Halfway through *Northern Lights* the brothers confront that weather. The confident one, Harvey, assures timid Perry there's no danger. They have maps, compasses, warm clothing; in short he forgets his ancestry. They ski off together into the uncontrollable elements of their lives and are immediately engulfed by blizzard, confusion, incompetence, surfacing illness. And in the end, having survived moments of terror and of radiant transcendence (rendered by O'Brien with a kind of open-heartedness, pitched higher than Hemingway's but respectful of the same integrities of nature, in an amplitude of style that refuses to be self-consciously ironic or self-denigrating), the bull of a brother, indeed as in the prophecy, is head down in the dead of winter, his antlers gone. Perry lugs him back from death, stolidly orders him to keep on breathing, becomes the true hero he has always been to cowed to be. Now, far from the dump, he can kill an animal he needs. He still thinks about it almost too much to be able to act: "He remembered his father explaining to Harvey that the chief element of hunting was neither surprise nor stealth nor good fortune, but instead the capacity to


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cast oneself completely and without motive in the role of the hunter. It was typical, the circular and almost mystical logic: you are a hunter if you are a hunter." He "concentrates on the sound a hunter would make while hunting." But what begins as a kind of act, a ventriloqual silence, becomes real: he kills a woodchuck because he and his brother are frozen and starving. Harvey is still contemptuous ("Do you know a woodchuck is a fucking big *rat*, that's all? . . . You went hunting for *woodchucks*?") But he's yielded up his authority, it has slowly seeped into his brother's blood, he has failed, by his own lights, to get them out of the danger he's so blindly gotten them into.

The last poet of the Minnesota woods and rivers took his awe and turned it to idolatry at Pamplona, in the end spent it on an old man marlin fishing. But O'Brien sees heroism as relative, thus simple. The words of Perry's grandfather describe it as a mature, perhaps, even a divine resignation: *What cannot be escaped must be endured, and if it must be endured it might as well be confronted.* So O'Brien dares, in fact is obligated to write a few more scenes after Perry's climactic emergence from the edge of death. He drags the intensely private heroic moment out into the flat light of a Minnesota morning and subjects Perry to the shame of facing a handful of laconic men at a gas station, his foiled rescuers. Far from impressed with his survival, they can't imagine how anybody but a damn fool could have gotten lost in the first place. So much for sympathy with one's cosmic confrontations. His exhilaration swallowed, Perry accepts the judgment: "Lucky, plain stupid lucky this time." Life dwindles back to "sleeping, eating, television and Harvey's expensive gin." But the genetic fix, not undone, has finally loosened a turn: Perry and his wife make plans to move on, Harvey begins to seem pathetic, swamped in the backwater with no will to dislodge himself. His daring girl, the smalltown Lady Brett, leaves not for Africa or the badlands but for Minneapolis ("The goddamn city. It's not even the city. A goddamn suburb.") There is no sense of victory or vindictiveness in this petty redeployment of forces. The book is so well-grounded in the humble daily movements of these intensely ordinary people that their triumphs are subtle, entirely dependent on our angle of vision under the huge sky. Perry, alone, has seen the northern lights rise, a kind of sign, a private fire at the heart of an icy bitterness. We all live very close to earth, O'Brien seems to be showing us, but the most modest of us, when we stand full height, casts a sufficiently decent length of shadow for our purposes.

**Rosellen Brown**

*Rosellen Brown* is the author of *Street Games* (Doubleday), a collection of short stories, and of *The Autobiogrpahy of My Mother*, a novel to be published this spring (Doubleday).

## The Wind's Twelve Quarters by Ursula K. Le Guin

(Harper & Row; $8.95)

Introducing one of the 17 stories in this "retrospective," Ursula Le Guin refers to William James in an attempt to define science-fiction. Revolutionary ideals, James wrote, "present themselves far less in the guise of effects of past experience than in that of possible causes of future experience . . ." Unlike many science-fiction writers, however, she is exhilarated less by "probable causes" than by "future experience," less by the gadgetry of the future than by the quality of life and the psychic consequences of social and technological change.

Much science-fiction works roughly along the same principles as science itself: can the problem or its solution be duplicated? Le Guin often begins with a scientific possibility, as in the story "Nine Lives," one of the finest in the volume, which dramatizes what happens when two technicians on a far-off planet are visited by assistants, a 10-person clone. Here is duplication personified. Le Guin is fascinated with what it would feel like to be a member of such a clone, sexually and emotionally self-sufficient, and as with the adjustment of the technicians to its members: ". . . a certain dread . . . invade me destroy me change me? Will he be different from me? . . . There's the terrible thing: the strangeness of the stranger." And she moves from this concern to the insight that future experience is still human experience. For all of us the distance between the stranger and oneself is absolute, but we learn to negotiate it so early that we may forget the negotiation is learned. The clone who survives the death of the other nine is just beginning to learn: "A lost piece of a broken set, a fragment, inexpert at solitude, not knowing even how you go about giving love to another. . . ." He is a cultural baby.

A kind of cultural relativism is implicit in many of these stories, in the fantasy "Semley's Necklace," the germ of her first novel *Rocannon's World*, and in "Winter's King," the germ of her masterpiece, *The Left Hand of Darkness*. One gleans from dust jackets that Le Guin's father is the anthropologist Kroeber who cared for Ishi. In *The Left Hand of Darkness* she writes anthropological science-fiction about a hermaphroditic species. What personality and society would result if at one time in your life you might be a mother, at another a father? Would the culture be more hearth-centered and peaceful for incorporating into the structure of power traditional female virtues? Indeed large scale war is unknown on Winter; sexism is absent where kings get pregnant. Such fiction seems like a feminist solution.

In essays on women and science-fiction Joanna Russ, herself a science-fiction writer (*The Female Man*), speculates that because women novelists today cannot within the conventions of realism do anything more than raise consciousness, cannot offer models of successful non-sexist behavior, they may turn to science-fiction where other sexual and social possibilities can be explored. But Le Guin does more than pose alternatives, for the central character of her novel is a Terran male whose attitudes are geared to a two-sexed society; he must learn to respond not to "man" and "woman," but to "human." And, as he falls in love with a native of Winter, Le Guin goes beyond the non-sexist reeducating of Mr. Ai, beyond "future experience," to a reconsideration of the nature of love and friendship, the attempts to bridge the isolation of one's own sexual body.

No wonder she also writes, although less successfully, what she calls "psychomyths," "more or less surrealistic tales" set "outside any history, outside of time, in that region of the living mind. . . ." Stories such as "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," "Darkness Box," and "Things" appear gimmicky precisely because they are not rooted in "possible causes" but attempt an immediate and hence facile "universality."

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In these stories her lapses into melodramatic understatement are more frequent. On the other hand, a more conventional science-fiction story, "The Field of Vision," is quite successful, beginning with an astronaut's return from Mars apparently blind. He has, it turns out, seen God; but Le Guin moves us with his plea: "All I have to do is open my eyes, and I see the Face of God. And I'd give all my life just to see one human face again, to see a tree, just a tree, a chair—a plain wooden chair, ordinary—They can keep their God, they can keep their Light. I want the world back. I want questions, not the answer." In this story future experience is rejected on humanistic grounds.

Le Guin is a poser of questions, then, not of answers. Even in *The Dispossessed*, her most recent novel, she speculates about the quality of life in an admitted utopia, raising questions about the relationships among sex, privacy and property. "The Day Before the Revolution," the last story in the collection, humanizes that utopia's founder the theorist, Odo, now an old and ill woman.

The stories are not so impressive as the best Le Guin novels, for Le Guin is superb at suspensefully sustaining long narrative sequences impossible in short fiction. Nevertheless "Nine Lives" and "The Field of Vision" need not be condescended to. Nor does it require special pleading to find *The Left Hand of Darkness* a moving and impressive novel. Like Doris Lessing, who has several times recently crossed in the other direction the traditional line between fiction and science-fiction, Ursula Le Guin is capable of a healthy blurring of genres.

**Joan Joffe Hall**

*Joan Joffe Hall* teaches English at the University of Connecticut.

## J. R.
## by William Gaddis

(Knopf; $15; paper $5.95)

Cantata: originally a narrative in verse set to recitative, or recitative and air, for a single voice with accompaniment; now a choral work, either sacred, resembling a short oratorio, or secular as a lyric drama set to music but not intended to be acted. So, the Oxford Dictionary. And so Jack Gibbs, writer, schoolteacher, divorcé, to fellow writer Tom Eigen, speaking of Edward Bast, composer who has just designated his unfinished opera an unfinished cantata: "God damned wise man pulls out nobody to tell what to do next right Bast? Write a cantata you don't need a plot, problem everybody running around wants to be told what happens next don't need a plot, looking for the wise man tell them what am I supposed to do now God damned wise man find out he's doing the same God damned thing walks up the shade and he's gone, rest of us sitting here looking at his footprints think he took it with him and he's gone."

William Gaddis has a great deal more to say about art, creation, communication, God, purpose and plot in his own sweeping prose cantata, *J.R. J.R.* is also, beyond dispute or mere convention, a novel. Not a conventional novel, but perhaps more surely and originally a novel than much that has recently passed for such. Those in search of a plot in the formal sense will undoubtedly continue to identify the rise and fall of the J.R. Corp Family of Companies under the precocious direction of the untied-sneaker, thumb-in-nose, sixth-grader J.R. as the central happening. From surplus plastic forks, to match books, to a decrepit textile mill, to a nursing-home-to-grave conglomerate (shortly to add massage parlors to that great life package), to mineral deposits in Indian lands (preservation), to pork-belly futures, to Frigicom, incorporating many others along the way, J.R. plies the crest from grubby childhood to world power to a crash that pulls much of the economy down with him. Everyone, including J.R., survives the crash, although key members of the corporate general staff end directing their endless sea of activities from a hospital where a central tycoon is receiving yet another prosthesis. And when one of his associates disagrees with his policies he threatens to sue him "for impersonating himself for impersonating Mr. Katz he's nobody, he's a lot of old parts stuck together he doesn't even exist." Follows a list of the parts Mr. Katz has acquired from others over the years: "God knows whose eyes he's looking through, wind-up toy with a tin heart he'll end up with a dog's brain and some nigger's kidneys why can't I take him to court and have him declared nonexistent, null void nonexistent. . . ."

J.R. remains physically intact, but he is as much a conglomerate of other people's words as Mr. Katz is of their bodies. Both have been tied far more firmly than normal social hostages to the actual surrounding environment. In them the line between the individual and society blurs. In this sense, therefore, J.R. is not an actor in the novel at all: he is society itself, the inescapable context (as opposed to the agent) of plot, of individual action, of personal life.

Homogenization, confusion, intermingling of realms constitute the core of *J.R.* Liberal social and cultural critics who revel in the view-with-alarm posture or radical chic opposition will delight in Gaddis' skill at depicting the intrusion of the corporate world into the worlds of education and the arts. Aphorism follows brilliant aphorism follows devastating image with a controlled abandon that will provide fodder for cocktail party paranoias of corruption for months to come. But that notion of corruption which rests upon the implicit acceptance of some master villain does violence to the complexity, artistic force and strand of genuine despair of Gaddis' work. An honest to God villain would make things much easier. In fact, Gaddis offers us no scapegoat, and I think his Gibbs must be taken with deadly seriousness when he says there is no wise man who vanished with the truth. And without a benificent meaning-giver or plot-maker, no anti-hero, no malevolent all-intending genius either. Thus Gibbs, early in the novel, speaking to his students: ". . .has it ever occurred to any of you that all this is simply one grand misunderstanding. Since you're not here to learn anything, but to be taught so that you can pass these tests, knowledge has to be organized so that it can be taught, and it has to be reduced to information so that it can be organized do you follow that. In other words this leads you to assume that organization is an inherent property of the knowledge itself, and that disorder and chaos are simply irrelevant forces that threaten it from the outside. In fact it is exactly the opposite. Order is simply a thin, perilous condition we try to impose on the basic reality of chaos."

The first part of Gibbs' tirade echoes (or independently lays out, for I do not wish to join the ranks of influences-on-Gaddis-ascribers) the best recent pedagogical criticism: Gibbs could be paraphrasing Jonathon Kozol or Herbert Kohl. The second part, however, laces inherently optimistic social criticism (things can be fixed, if we

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follow the truth and fight the demons) with a measure of bona fide tragedy, far removed from some simple manichean vision of the war between good and evil. No doubt, of course, that Gaddis has mastered the absurd logic of corporate society. Thus one of the themes of *J.R.* charts the accelerating deterioration of education from school as custodial institution, to televised teaching, to the packaging of communications skills, to advertisements in textbooks, to money for grades, to school personnel turning up as hospital personnel. And the novel ends with a child still trapped in a vast statue on a wind-swept cultural plaza, victim of the combined forces of purchased art and cultural-hegemony-seeking purchasing power. Opposed to freeing the child stands a powerful group, MAMA (Modern Allies of Mandible Art), which is, through its attorneys, "seeking an injunction against what it terms willful destruction of a unique metaphor of man's relation to the universe."

Gaddis' mastery of irony should require no further comment. Gaddis works through irony. Most readers will readily grasp a sense of the child as victim: victim of the educational process, of culture, of business, of a world that seeks to turn parenthood to profit. Mama herself will sacrifice the child to a metaphor. But the point is that the child is part of the process, agent as well as victim, and rapidly absorbing and shaping society as well as being imprisoned by it.

Gaddis plays skillfully, although never glibly, with the tortured tangle of human existences. Child and parents, husband and wife, lover and lover meet each other, pass each other, use each other, lose each other. No marriage remains standing at the novel's close. The tragic mutual incomprehension of men and women infects even Gibbs' poignant and unmediated affair with Amy Joubert (teacher, divorcée-in-the-making, mother, heiress). "Jack is that why you'd want me to love you? for the one thing any other man can replace? The one thing a woman's afraid of a man loving her for when she thinks that's the only reason he. . ." The confusion and pain of human contact twists through the novel, people never sure if they love or whom or why. Their love never moves directly from one individual to another; it passes inexorably through the social nexus. And as Gibbs says to Amy, "I mean sometimes there are situations that just don't seem to have any solution in their own context. . . ." The context for their affair which started in the vein of *le déjeuner sur l'herbe* blends undifferentiatedly with "camping out at Bloomingdale's." Her apartment, their haven, resounds with overtones of Matisse and upper-east-side conformity.

This novel does not make for easy reading; nor does it end in some reassuring grand design. The 700-odd pages of almost uninterrupted conversation, unrelieved even by chapter breaks, capture the pervasive plasticity of a social experience that blends imperceptibly with mindless technological necessity. God is not in his heaven, all is not right with the world. Even the human facsimile of divine purpose, artistic creation, is fighting a desperate rear-guard action against the lack of purpose. The theme of creativity, like that of love with which it intertwines, twists in and out. The writer Schramm commits suicide. The event drowns in a stream of talk. Only gradually does it surface in the consciousness of his friends who know that ". . .what Schramm wanted was a woman he could trust with everything he had, wanted it so much he knew if he thought he had it and lost it he'd cut his throat so. . .instead. . .he took the safe way no commitment no intimacy no passion no conversation but fucking this and fucking that. . ." Yet as Gibbs recognizes, love (or its lack) alone did not destroy Schramm: "Christ look can't you see it wasn't any of that! it was, it was worse than that? it was whether what he was trying to do was worth doing even if he couldn't do it? whether anything was worth writing even if he couldn't write it?"

In this society, our society, as Gaddis' characters keep reminding each other, status has given way to contract, which means that personal contact has given way to instrumentalism. The decline of legitimate authority has left a vacuum that precludes genuine evil as much as higher purpose. The super-child J.R. stands as the essence of a society increasingly infantilized for all its apparent power. By no accident, *J.R.* includes no substantial parents. The novel opens with Bast's family—two maiden aunts and a cousin (lover? sister?). His parentage remains uncertain: one candidate for father has just died, the other is, and remains throughout, absent on a business trip.

The critics will have a field day with *J.R.* It ought to provide fodder for English classes (provided there still are English classes) for years to come. The levels of meaning defy any succinct rendering. The wider one's knowledge, the more numerous the opportunities for discrete interpretations, but those unequipped to catch the subtler puns and allusix will have no trouble with people living in toilets, humans as machines, corporations as families, buying shares in America, and so forth. At least by the second reading, if not the first, even the untrained ear will begin to pick up the haunting melodies, the phrases that recur periodically in old and newly absurd context. Gaddis has more than proved himself a master of his craft, and that craft is sheer delight. After indulging in taking the pieces apart, one must return to listening to the whole.

**Elizabeth Fox-Genovese**

*Elizabeth Fox-Genovese* teaches history at the University of Rochester.

## Lamy of Sante Fe
## by Paul Horgan

(Farrar Straus & Giroux; $15)

A few years ago Robert Coles wrote for *Commonweal* a poignant profile of an elderly Catholic priest in New Mexico. Coles was working in Albuquerque at the time and visiting the homes of some Spanish-Americans in the Southwest. His priest expressed the muscular opinions of someone who had wrestled a lifetime against the world and its ways, but more than that—priestly bouts against materialism are common enough—he talked stirringly about his vocation. He had lived amid poverty but his life had a richness, in the service he gave to the lonely and beaten-down of his parish and in his fidelity to the teachings of the Church. He said nothing about "fulfillment," "self-realization," or other newcomer concepts that these days are used to push aside the fact that sacrifice and struggle are basic to any true vocation. Instead he was a man looking back on a life of service and belief, sensing that he had done well all those years to keep the faith and share his energy.

On reading the Coles article I wondered about the tradition from

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which this priest came. Many of my questions have been answered by Paul Horgan in his resourceful and buoyant biography of Juan Bautista Lamy, the first archbishop of Santa Fe. Horgan's scholarship avoids heaviness, and he also stays clear of the candlestick prose that all too often drips the wax of piety whenever the life of a holy man is recounted. Solid and detached biographies of the saintly are uncommon—two exceptions are Anne Fremantle's life of Charles de Foucald or Harry Emerson Wildes' William Penn. The excellence of Horgan's work is not accidental. He spent 20 years on the project—off and on, we can assume, because he has been writing on other topics in that time—and was allowed into the Vatican's archives. (There ought to be at least a 5000 word essay or two on the politics of getting into the Vatican's stacks.)

Lamy came to Sante Fe in 1851. He had been in the Midwest for a dozen years as a parish priest, in the quiet, devout style of a Curé of Ars, learning the ways of the American frontier, Providence and ecclesiastical politics. Bishops are not created without the latter. In Lamy's case, his name was sent to the Vatican by the episcopal power brokers in Baltimore, but only after he was passed over for less severe posts in St. Paul and Monterey, California. The diocese of Santa Fe was so far from being a plum that the Vatican had resisted inflicting it on anyone for more than two centuries. Lamy, 35, "was amazed . . . that he had been nominated for the mitre." He could only have been amazed also at the territorial breadth of his see: 236,000 square miles, an area larger than France, and with a population that included Spaniards, Indians, soldiers, traders and a stubborn clergy not about to accept the imposed authority of an outsider Frenchman. Lamy, Horgan writes, "carried within him the medieval styles of central France, and of the fresh, young towns of the forest clearings in Ohio, so lately affected by the comforts increasingly brought by developing canals and railroads. Santa Fe, as he found it, showed no such effects of technical civilization."

The corporal works of mercy and rescue for which Lamy came had to be postponed while he settled jurisdictional squabbles. He also had to impose discipline on priests who were largely "incapable or unworthy." It was often friendship outside church circles that came easier. Once, far out on the trail, he saved from death Levi Spiegelberg, a Santa Fe merchant bringing back supplies in a Mexican wagon train. The Mexicans thought Spiegelberg had cholera and wanted to dump him, but Lamy took him into his own covered wagon. "In a week," Horgan writes, "he was cured, and had a story to share later with his brothers—handsome and cultivated men—which bound the Spiegelbergs to Lamy in lifelong friendship."

As Lamy worked to clean up the local messes, he recruited nuns and priests from the East and from Europe to help. If spreading the faith was still not routine, at least the local scandalization of it was being tempered. He roved the expanses of his diocese, a horseback prelate, doing little more—though it was plenty—than offer the sacraments to people who measured pastoral visits by years, not weeks or months. "Yet he held on, aided by new colleagues, and with a barely tenable gain here, another there, Lamy's pattern of colonization slowly took root: missions first, schools next, amenities of charity next, and in due time, as a result of the combination of these, a slow emergence of civilized life, to match both the needs and contributions of an always increasing population of prospectors, traders, and finally, town-makers." That is often the last test that churchmen meet, and some never at all: does their love and care for the souls in their own flock spill over to the secular community in practical ways that make a difference to those whose needs are more human than spiritual? Christianity has legions of bishops who have sacramentalized whole parishes, while ignoring the needs of those outside the faith as though they were also outside the walls.

Lamy died in 1888. He served nearly four decades in the Southwest. His life and travels were used by Willa Cather for her Bishop Latour in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. In his closing paragraphs, Horgan asks about Lamy: "Who knew how much spiritual energy was thoughtlessly inherited, absorbed, and reactivated in later inheritors?" No exact answer is possible but one of the inheritors was surely the priest of Robert Coles—not a spectacular replica of Lamy perhaps but at least a vessel for carrying on a tradition of mercy and faith.

**Colman McCarthy**

*Colman McCarthy* is on the staff of *The Washington Post*. His recent book is *Inner Companions*, (Acropolis).

# Reconsideration

## Great River
## by Paul Horgan

(Holt, Rinehart and Winston; $11.95)

History-as-nightmare may be something from which none of us will ever awaken, but in books like Paul Horgan's *Great River: The Rio Grande in North American History* we get a rousing good shake and a fighting chance to open our eyes. Not that Horgan's vision is as glibly rosy as that of many another chronicler of the Southwest. On the contrary, throughout the epic sweep of *Great River* (from prehistory to the 20th century) one is fully aware that greed, cruelty and madness have been the acolytes of every change and movement, every rise to power and fall from grace. But what sets *Great River* apart and is its finest virtue is Horgan's ability to inspirit human events with the flavor and feeling of the land that spawned them. The stage he sets is broad, permanent. In the background one feels the steady pulse of the land and its river; they endure. At least until the coming of the railroads and the automobile, the land invariably conquered its conquerors.

Within a mere 50 years of Columbus' first voyage Coronado was exploring the valleys and plains of the upper river. By 1598 Onate had established a permanent colony there while on the Atlantic Jamestown followed by nine years and Plymouth by 22. Yet there would be little similarity between the colonies, east and west. For a full 100 years after the eastern seaboard was thoroughly settled and formed into a new nation, the Southwest remained nearly as wild as Coronado had known it, its settlements mere oases in a wilderness that ran to the front door of every house. No other area on the continent resisted European man's concerted efforts to tame it for so long, and no other writer exceeds Horgan's ability to evoke the power and beauty of that wild land.

The scope of the work is shaped by neither political nor cultural boundaries. Its territory is defined only by the river that snakes 1900 miles from the snow-capped mountains of southern Colorado through desert, canyon and plain to the swampy margins of the Gulf of Mexico, and on this continent is exceeded in

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length only by the Mississippi-Missouri system. The river and the dry wilderness at its sides provide the thread to unite the centuries of human experience there; culture, armies and law do not.

Within a year of its appearance in 1954 *Great River* had won for its author both the Bancroft and Pulitzer prizes in history. (Horgan found himself in rather august company that year, even among prizewinners. William Faulkner, Wallace Stevens and Tennessee Williams were also awarded Pulitzers.) Nevertheless critics were by no means unanimous in their praise of the book. Some found it arty and accused it of being too "pretty" for history. One critic at the *New Yorker* summarized many of his fellows' misgivings. "An odd thing happens to writers who live in the high country," he wrote, ignoring the fact that the Rio Grande, like any major river, must flow through the lowest land in its region. "They see the mountains, the sand, the stars, the cactus,the wrinkled Indians and they begin to babble about 'time' and 'space.'"

He may as well have said that history is at all times obliged to be sere and sober and that there is no place in it for poetry or enchantment, even such as the people who are its subject may have felt in their own lives. Happily, that is not Horgan's point of view. As the river is animate and mysterious in the mind of the Pueblo and of many who followed him to its banks, so it is evoked in Horgan's graceful prose.

> *The river was a power which like the light of the sky was never wholly lost. It came from the north beyond knowing, and it went to the south nobody knew where. It was always new and yet always the same. . . . The water was brown, as brown as a body, and both lived on earth as brown. The river was part of the day's prayer.*

Four "books" make up the whole of *Great River*, all 1000 pages of it. One book is devoted to each of the four peoples who successively dominated the history of the Rio Grande: Pueblos, Spanish, Mexicans and Anglo-Americans. Horgan, who has written countless short stories and no less than a dozen novels, lends his considerable imaginative power to the task of recreating the quotidian reality of each of those peoples. In ritual and dance we meet the Pueblo Indians who "solved with restraint and beauty the problem of modest physical union with their mighty surroundings." Later through the fierce comfortless language of their prayers, we encounter the powerful fuel of religious belief that "existed within the Spanish not as a compartment where they kept their worship and faith, but as a condition of their very being, like the touch by which they felt the solid world, and the breath of life they drew until they died."

In Books III and IV the tempo of the work rapidly accelerates. Mechanization is creeping toward the river. Energetic, individualistic men from the east increasingly jostle the feudal calm and complacency of the Mexican Southwest. War is all but perpetual. Along the banks of the river rage the Texan War for Independence, the US war with Mexico, the Civil War, Navaho, Comanche and Apache wars, the sadistic raids of outlaws and border bandits and expeditions to avenge them. In Old Mexico *revolution is continual*; armies materialize and dissolve as cyclically as tides; then Pershing's Punitive Expedition, finally peace.

The mad pace of events is matched by the extraordinarily high level of excitement sustained by the writing. But there are also interludes of quiet where the rhythm mellows and Horgan continues the practice established in Book I and II of devoting long chapters to the social history of the river's people. In one called "Collective Prophecy" his subject matter ranges from backwoods song, theater and language to the careers of Edward Hicks and Audubon. The result is as good a digest of the American frontier experience as one may hope to find.

There is one problem. As a tool for further research on the Southwest, *Great River* is not much help. Although the bibliography is marvelously complete (Horgan was librarian at New Mexico Military Institute for many years), specific sources for material in the text have been omitted in the interest of not "diverting the attention of the reader." Hence frustration. One wishes he had left more tracks (as he did so well in *Lamy of Santa Fe*, in a separate section of "Notes"), yet compared to the immensity of his achievement, that is a niggling complaint.

It is a little hard to believe, but Horgan claims that not until he had written *Great River*—the product of some dozen years of effort—was he convinced that his true calling lay in writing. Other arts, principally painting and drama, attracted him as well. A recent exhibition at the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe of watercolor studies he made in preparation for the writing of *Lamy* attested to his talent in at least one of those fields. It also shed light on his method, clearly indicating the source of much of the brightly visual imagery in his prose.

*Great River* concludes with some rather awkward commentary on the changes that the present century has brought to the Southwest, but it is not as though Horgan simply runs out of steam. Motorized transportation has thrown a web over the land. Year by year the vast distances miraculously shrink and the former impregnability of the desert wilderness breaks down. Trading posts become gas stations. An omnivorous national culture flows outward to digest the peculiarities of its most peculiar region.

Horgan ends his history with a kind of mystical optimism and gestures vaguely toward the future. He does not quite seem to know what to make of a civilization that builds Los Alamos and the bomb and that no longer finds itself bound to the life-giving power of the Great River. In that, he is certainly not alone.

**William deBuys**

*William deBuys*, who lives in Chamisal, New Mexico, is writing a book about the Pecos wilderness area in northern New Mexico.

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# Correspondence

## "GNT" Compromise

*To the editors:*

A comment on TRB's excellent look backward (*TNR*, Jan. 3 & 10) to our country's first centennial is in order. He sets the stage so perfectly for consideration of our predicament today, which

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could not have been foreshadowed by the mechanical demonstrations of 1876 at Philadelphia (although there seems to be a sameness in the political manifestations of the era with those of today).

It happened that I read *The New Republic* and the January 3rd *Washington Post*'s editorial littering on the same day, and found the phrase "gross national trashpile," which led me to muse on the relationship between the past century's creation of our trillion-dollar gross national product with its beginnings presented at Philadelphia in 1876.

Perhaps the great task before us for the next century will be to negotiate a compromise between the GNP and the "GNT"—if we are intelligent enough to become aware that the problem exists.

*Frances L. Childe*
*Cambridge, Maryland*

## Another Agnew Dictum

*To the editors:*
Thanks for your excellent editorial on the Concorde SST (*TNR*, Jan. 17). The arguments of that plane's backers bring to mind the infamous dictum of Dr. Harold Agnew (delivered when he was director of the weapons division at Los Alamos Laboratories): "The basis of advanced technology is innovation. And nothing is more stifling to innovation than seeing one's product not used, or ruled out of consideration on flimsy premises involving public world opinion."

*John F. Hellegers*
*Washington, DC*

## The Nader Seal of Approval

*To the editors:*
Your December 20 editorial on the FCC's Conglomerate Study cover-up is a great public service. One point, however, needs correction. Lawyers from Ralph Nader's Public Citizens Litigation Group have provided substantial assistance to National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting and to us in pursuing the Freedom of Information Act claim to the Conglomerate Study materials before the FCC.

This and other Nader organizations, particularly the National PIRG, have also been active in many other areas of communications regulation reform in recent years.

*Frank W. Lloyd*
*Executive Director*
*Citizens Communications Center*

## Blame Laying

*To the editors:*
Your editorial "Power Struggle" on the tax cut (*TNR* Jan. 3&10) gratified the instincts of editors for the comforts of assigning blame impartially to both sides, in this case President and Congress. Your self-indulgence was unfair and irresponsible. The President's position on the tax cut was wrong from the beginning.

It was wrong economically. The last thing an economy just emerging from the deepest recession in post-war history needs is an increase in taxes. As the price of merely continuing the 1975 tax cuts, the President is asking for equivalent cuts of government spending in fiscal year 1977, when the economy will still not be ready for a contractionary shock.

It was wrong governmentally. The Congress has been putting into operation a new procedure for overall budget control, a historic reform which neither *The New Republic* nor the President has the grace to recognize. This year the Congress has made it work in a highly professional and responsible manner. The President tried to bypass it, and all the Congress asked was to see his budget and follow the regular new procedures before committing itself to the size of the 1977 budget.

Both the President's initial proposal and the veto message were demagogic, and the country was saved a serious error only by the patience and forbearance of Congress. Basically, the President is trying to hold economic recovery hostage to his particular conservative views about the scope and size of federal government. One might have expected *The New Republic* to see that these issues should be kept separate.

*James Tobin*
*New Haven, Connecticut*

by Mordecai Richler

". . . begins in delight and ends in wisdom."
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# The Classifieds

## Personals

HISTORICAL WOMEN T-SHIRTS: Amelia Earhart, Babe Zaharias, Collette, Susan B. Anthony, Virginia Woolf, Isadora Duncan, Emma Goldman, Gertrude Stein, Billy Holiday, Joan of Arc, Emily Dickinson, George Sand. $6.00 each, 4/20.00. Warren Screen Press, 29 Warren St., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02141

MEN OF LETTERS T-SHIRTS: Plato, Aristotle, Nietzche, Hegel, Karl Marx, Bertrand Russell, J.S. Bach, Gustav Mahler, Sigmund Freud, Hume. $6.00 each, 4/$20.00. Warren St. Press, 29 Warren St., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02141

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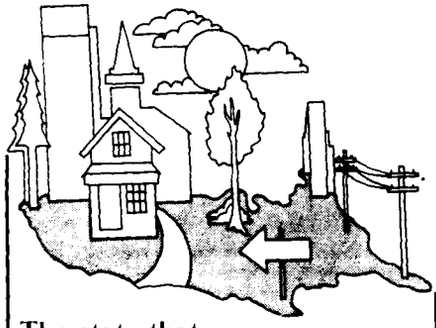

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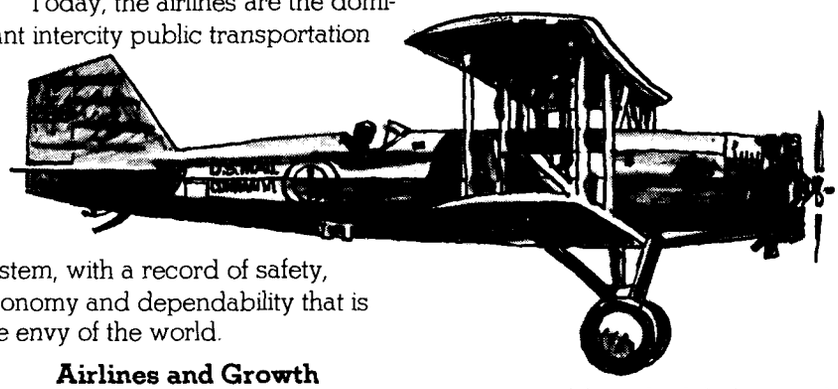

### Airlines and Growth

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### Airlines and Fares

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A half century ago military pilots helped carry the mail. Today, the responsiveness and flexibility of the scheduled airline system, with its skilled professionals and world-wide facilities, constitutes a key reserve in the event of national emergency. The airline Civil Reserve Air Fleet saves taxpayers millions of dollars in readiness costs.

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